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THE MOSCOW CONVERSATIONS have done much to dispel the gloom which had hung over Europe since the failure of the Simon-Hitler discussions of the previous week. No definite agreement was reached because none was intended. But the fact that the representatives of Great Britain and the USSR were both ready to recognize the necessity of strengthening the collective system of security is of utmost importance. The views of the Soviet Union have long been known. More than any other country it has urged regional pacts of mutual assistance as a safeguard of peace, and has stressed the necessity for united action by all the powers against the threat of German aggression. The British position, on the other hand, has been extremely uncertain. Moscow had feared that Hitler's opposition to an Eastern Locarno would cause the British to waver in support of that plan. It is now clear that Hitler's intransigeance has had the opposite effect of driving Britain to recognize, somewhat belatedly, the urgency of collective action, even to the extent of isolating Germany if necessary. The British will not be a party to an Eastern pact. Moscow has not asked that. But if they throw the weight of their diplomatic support behind this proposal they can make it very difficult for Germany to hold out against it. One vital interpretation appears to have been given at Moscow by Capt. Eden, subject to approval by the British cabinet. If Germany attacks Russia, the British will not regard a French attack on Germany as a violation of the Locarno pact. With this assurance Franco-Russian cooperation becomes a reality, of the greatest service to peace. There will be no war in Europe so long as Britain, France and the Soviet Union stand together.

ANTHONY EDEN'S visit to Warsaw will have more immediate bearing on the possibility of establishing an Eastern Locarno than his historic visit to Moscow. Poland is loath to enter such a system, not only because Hitler does not want it to, but even more because it has committed itself to playing a buffer state role, relying for its independence on the rivalry between Russia and Germany. To join the encirclement of Germany will limit this independence and bring it back into the French system. Capt. Eden's task then is to demonstrate to Poland that there is more safety in the collective system than in playing on the innate rivalry between fascist Germany and communist Russia. The argument will not be convincing unless the British envoy is able, as he will not yet be able, to say that the collective system is sure of Britain's unqualified cooperation. The Poles are not to be had otherwise. They are too large already and too poor to cherish immediate ambitions of expansion. They need peace as much as any country in Europe. But they do not wish to join a collective system which is not going to be so overwhelmingly strong as to insure peace. Otherwise the next war would be fought in Poland, and might end in still another partition. An Eastern Locarno for the sweet sake of France is no longer of interest to Poland, particularly not if the collective system is not going to prevent war. And there always is the distant future, when Poland may be strong enough to feel like expanding eastwards under the auspices of Germany.

THE DECISION of the Supreme Court in the Scottsboro case will go down in history along with Lincoln's emancipation proclamation as a milestone in the struggle for racial equality in the United States. It is a complete vindication for those who have felt from the beginning that the case involved a principle far deeper than the unjust conviction of seven Negro boys. If the decision can be enforced, it will mean that the established tradition of keeping Negroes subjected by legal terrorism will have to be abandoned. In any case, it will mean that the type of race hysteria which brought about the arrest and conviction of the Scottsboro boys will occur with much less frequency than before, and that when it occurs there will be legal recourse for the defendants. And it may not be too much to hope that provision for Negroes to serve on juries may be a step towards the granting of full legal rights. That the battle against mob rule has not yet been won, however, is clearly demonstrated by the conviction at Sacramento on the same day as the Supreme Court's decision of eight young radicals on a trumped-up charge of "conspiracy." Substitute California for Alabama and replace racial prejudice by anti-red

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hysteria, and the parallel between the conduct of the two trials is complete. The defendants' sole crime, like that of Herndon and other Negroes who have been railroaded to jail, was that of attempting to organize the underprivileged in the struggle for better living conditions. The fight for justice in the courts must go on until not only the South but California recognize that they are parts of the Union.

DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS against John Strachey have been dropped and he has returned to Great Britain without any light whatever having fallen on the exceedingly dark question whether an alien entering our portals is entitled to believe in communism. The ostensible reason for dropping the proceedings was that Mr. Strachey was leaving anyway. But this is not even adroit deception. The immigration authorities when they arrested him knew he was to leave the country at the end of March. They also knew when they dropped the proceedings that he was willing to remain here and fight the deportation charges to the Supreme Court if need be. In fact, they were facing the awkward necessity of having to renew his visum for the ultimate privilege of deporting him. The heavenly irony of this may have been too much for the usually sensible Col. MacCormack, and he obviously seized on a device which saved him from being both absurd and in danger of losing his case, as he well might have done. But the public is entitled now to ask for an intelligible concise statement of what a visiting alien is allowed to believe in this country. If it is to be a deportable offense simply to believe in the desirability of communism, Col. MacCormack should not be relieved of the hateful necessity of saying so. If not, he should be spared no syllable of the censure he deserves for arresting Mr. Strachey.

THE TRUCE by which the United Mine Workers and the Appalachian coal operators agree to extend their present wage contracts until June 16, seriously reduces the possibility of another nation-wide wave of strikes during the Spring months. It was of course improbable that the Lewis leadership would call a walkout. More than any other A. F. of L. union, the U. M. W. A. stands committed to the code device, to arbitration by labor boards, and to legislative panaceas like the Guffey bill. But the mere possibility of a bituminous coal strike served to stimulate labor unrest in many other industries. To outward appearances at least, the A. F. of L. is preparing for walkouts in the automobile and rubber manufacturing industries. No doubt the A. F. of L. leaders in both industries are under heavy pressure from their rank-and-file membership. But the leaders themselves are timid. Already automobile production is in the process of tapering off from its seasonal peak, and it would be difficult to carry through walkouts in Detroit and Akron in the face of a reduction in output and employment. Moreover, the A. F. of L. has come to terms once more with the Administration. Advanced to an equal rank with management on the NIRB, and lured on by rumors of Presidential support for the Labor Relations Bill, the A. F. of L. is not likely to resort to militant action. Realists might say that the best way of hastening enactment of the Wagner Bill would be by walkouts in the mass-production industries, but Realpolitik is beyond the powers of Mr. Green.

IN COTTON TEXTILES, however, forces are at work which may soon lead to an explosion similar to that of September, 1934. Despite the Textile Labor Relations Board, a multitude of discrimination cases have not yet been adjusted, and stretchout complaints continue to flow in. The cotton textile employers have reverted to the policy of liquidating inventories by curtailing output. Minimum wages under the full 40 hours per week which the code sanctions, are low enough: $13 in the North and $12 in the South. Thanks to the recent 25 per cent curtailment order, workers will be restricted to a thirty-hour week, and minimum earnings will fall to $10 and $9. It was the impact of production curtailment upon weekly earnings which brought on the great but short-lived textile strike of 1934. The next strike, if it comes, will be attributable to exactly the same kind of impact. The chances are that such a strike will be widespread and prolonged; for the workers have had many months to assimilate the lessons of last fall's defeat.

DUE TO AN UNUSUAL LAPSE in Washington reporting, several days passed before it became known that the Senate in voting for the work-relief bill adopted an amendment which may lead to the destruction of the AAA and to a policy of wholesale dumping of agricultural products abroad. This is the George amendment, authorizing the President to use relief funds to pay farmers what they now receive from processing taxes, which could be suspended for a year, and also to use relief funds to subsidize exports of farm products. The Washington newspaper offices are badly understaffed, so the delay in explaining the amendment cannot be censured, but it demonstrates how easy it is getting to slip things over in the capital. The purpose of the George amendment is to suspend the processing tax, in the hope that once it is removed the public will never accept it again. Then the basis of the AAA would be destroyed and agriculture could return to its good old freedom. Under the influence of Mr. Peek even the AAA itself is toying with the idea of subsidized dumping, though Mr. Wallace wisely remarks that foreign countries would at once protect themselves by quotas and further restrictions. And these would continue the suffocation of world trade in general. While the AAA itself is not sound, it should not be supplanted by a folly ten times more mad.

THE NEW NRA, according to the terms of the bill introduced for its continuation at the behest of the Administration, will be too much like the old one to satisfy anyone hoping that its failures had taught the New Dealers any profound lessons. The only sign of education revealed is in the language of the bill, which has been carefully edited to conform with the rulings of the Supreme Court. Simplifications are introduced, the number of codes will be reduced, control over intrastate commerce will not be attempted, and the President is given authority to impose codes when industries fail to formulate their own. But the terms of the bill are kept so vague, as Paul Ward points out in his article on the NRA in this issue, that evasion and delay can continue to be the weapons of industry in circumventing such social merit as remains in the plan. Even a vague law could be applied for the good of the country if the spirit were there to do it. And a more

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precise law has no meaning if the President does not care to use it. Either the NRA becomes an organ for the government of business, or it will continue to be a convenient device by which business men may sanctify practices which otherwise would trouble their consciences.

MILO RENO, the belligerent leader of the Farmers' Holiday Association, is set upon testing the possibility of uniting our leading demagogues. He has invited Father Coughlin, Senator Long, Dr. Townsend, and Governor Olson to address his association on May 7 at Des Moines. Coughlin, Long, and Olson have accepted, Dr. Townsend begging off because the occasion was "too political." Coughlin and Long so far have not spoken from the same platform though the orange blossoms for a joint appearance already have been supplied by General Johnson. It seems to us much too early for the demagogues to be pooling their forces. Long certainly will not care to invite Protestant opposition in aligning himself openly with Father Coughlin, and the radio priest must feel that he is quite effective for the present in his solo role as a future Hitler. Next year, if the depression deepens, circumstances might well create a union, and then it would be more than a novelty. We do not like to see Governor Olson in this company, but we think a meeting which he addresses along with Reno, Coughlin, and Long will be both spectacular and foreboding. We note in passing that William Allen White has issued a warning to the Republican party that the country will go fascist behind its demagogues unless the G. O. P. becomes imbued with a genuinely progressive faith. It sounds to us more like straight prophecy than the postulation of an alternative.

THE IMPORTANCE of constant vigilance and organized mass action for the protection of civil rights has never been more dramatically demonstrated than in the case of Manuel Fonseca, Cuban teacher, who was saved from execution by a last-minute change of heart on the part of the Cuban military authorities. Fonseca had been condemned to death by a military court-martial on the charge, which he denied, of possessing explosives in his home. The sentence was to have been carried out on the morning of March 30, no appeal being allowed from the decision of the military court. On the afternoon of March 29 the Cuban cabinet met, having been deluged with protests from all parts of the world, and amended the law under which Fonseca had been convicted, with provision that the change should apply retroactively. But it was not until within an hour of the time set for the execution that the army leaders finally agreed to commute Fonseca's sentence to life imprisonment. In explaining this action Colonel Pedrosa, chief of the Fifth Military District of Havana, made no mention of the cabinet's modification of the law, but attributed it to "thousands of telegrams . . . asking that the execution be stayed." Fonseca has been saved, but scores of other Cubans face summary trial on charges of revolutionary activity. Included among these is Dr. Herminio Portell Vila, distinguished scholar and Cuban delegate to the Montevideo Conference. Dr. Portell Vila was tried in the Urgency Court and found "not guilty" in five minutes. Despite his acquittal he has not been released but is being held for a second trial on April 5 when a large group of alleged conspirators, members of the ABC, Young Cuba, and Communist parties, will be brought before the court. This procedure is manifestly unfair to Portell Vila who has never been a member of any political group.

IN ARKANSAS night-riding planters are threatening the very lives of miserable share-croppers whose living has already been taken away. It is a primitive and sordid war that seems scarcely to belong to modern times. In Washington, meanwhile, in the spacious offices of the New Deal such enlightened gentlemen as Henry Wallace and Chester Davis continue to ignore a crisis which the AAA itself helped to precipitate. On another page of this issue, John Herling gives a first-hand report of conditions in Arkansas. We are even more interested in an earlier first-hand report which was made at public expense by Mrs. Mary Connor Myers who spent several weeks investigating the plight of the share-cropper for the Department of Agriculture. That report has never been published. Technically, the Department of Agriculture may have the right to suppress it. Morally it has no such right in a situation involving the lives and livelihood of thousands of citizens whose only hope of justice seems to lie in an appeal to public opinion outside their own benighted area. The nature of Mrs. Myers's findings is already known. She is reported to have said that cotton-belt conditions are worse than those of war-torn Belgium and, further, that she could hardly eat her meals at night after interviewing hungry families all day. We challenge Secretary Wallace to publish Mrs. Myers's report; and we urge our readers to reinforce our demand with letters and telegrams.

IN HONOR of the visiting British diplomats, a Soviet orchestra at the Academic Theatre in Moscow played "God Save the King" followed by the "Internationale." We can think of nothing calculated to give a greater sense of security to King George V, first cousin to the late Czar.

MAYOR LA GUARDIA has banished hurdy-gurdys and all street musicians and also flower push-carts, on the theory that he wants no more "begging" on the streets of New York. The Mayor is an advanced social thinker, but in this case he has brought forth nonsense. Hurdy-gurdy music is certainly not of the quality of the Philharmonic Orchestra, at whose concerts the Mayor is often seen, but surely it has a place in the life of any great city. It adds a filip to the reveries of the pedestrian and to the day-dreams of the young, and a people occasionally humming "O Sole Mio" and "The Pearl Fishers" is surely to be preferred to a people humming "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," or not humming at all. It is a fact, seldom noted by musicologists, that hurdy-gurdy music is generally of a relatively high order. The proprietors of barrel-organs are an aristocratic race, and they play the cream of musical lore. On the few occasions when they condescend to Broadway music it is of the better quality. Instead of banishing hurdy-gurdys from the streets, Mayor La Guardia should help them multiply. And the same with flower push-carts. These add color and a certain grand irresponsibility to the life of a community. New York, with its massive buildings and bridges and paved roads, has science enough. It needs more poetry—more songs and flowers—and we hope that the Mayor will consult his heart and good sense, and rescind his ill-considered order.

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The Problem of Neutrality

CONGRESS, under the pressure of the European crisis, is naturally in a hurry to formulate a new policy of American neutrality. The Nye Committee has added this task to its many services and we sympathize with its determination to make sure we shall not be embroiled in another ruinous European war. Pacifists will wish to capitalize the isolationist sentiment of the country. They want to make sure we are not drawn into war by commercial and banking interests. They want to challenge the sincerity of militarists, who build a huge navy and air force, and announce at the same time that they are interested only in peace. There is some virtue in the argument that if peace is what we want, the way to get it is to withdraw from contact with the outside world, supply no money or goods to outside countries in times of crises, and reduce our own fighting forces. We are geographically invulnerable. We need never fight unless in defense of interests beyond our shores.

The bills under consideration by the Nye Committee would prohibit the supply of munitions to all belligerents and loans to all foreign governments or their nationals while they are at war. Significantly they would declare all trade in contraband with belligerents to be at the senders' risk, subject to claims for compensation at the end of the war. And a further measure would warn Americans traveling into danger zones that they do so without the protection of their government. Had these bills been on the statute books in 1914 we probably would not have entered the World War.

But we see a flaw in the argument that isolation is the best way of keeping the peace. It applies only if we abandon membership in the world, which is hardly possible and certainly not desirable. Any great war would ultimately affect interests which we are incapable of denying. The genuine guaranty of peace for ourselves is peace for the world at large. The principle of collective action is the only real safeguard. Admittedly, this is an unpropitious moment to make this assertion. The unsound beginning of a collective system in the League has been ruined, and it may take years to replace it with a sound one. The menace of Hitler's rearmament, however, may drive reluctant powers like Italy and Britain into a new system more realistic, hence more imposing, than the League, and at an earlier time than once seemed likely. And if such a system arises, or if there is hope of its arising, America should be free to cooperate, and should not greet it with the neutrality of utter absence.

For our part we do not care to belong to a peace system of international military sanctions. We do not believe that peace can be maintained by continually increasing the cost and horror of war, by making sure that every war will be a world war. It is not to be guaranteed by frightening people, at least not for all time. It depends on the world finding a civilized way of settling international disputes. As individuals have had to take to the law instead of their shotguns, states must come to agree to live according to a body of principles in their own and in the common interest. They will not do so because they are "good" nations, and war is "bad." They will do it out of intelligent self-interest.

The peaceful settlement of disputes depends on collective world opinion. There must be machinery and there must be understanding of the machinery. The Supreme Court functions without sanctions, and we hope that the machinery of a collective system will ultimately work without them. But a nation cannot belong to such a system, attempting to settle international disputes without war, and at the same time announce in advance its utter isolation in event the machinery breaks down. For a similar withdrawal by all nations would as much as anything produce the breakdown. If nation "A" refuses to live up to the principles of peaceable settlement, and nation "B" was attacked, we might well wish to rush to the aid, by money, munitions, and goods, of nation "B." Not to do so might assure the victory of "A" over "B" and over the principles on which peace is built. That is precisely what is risked by the text of the measures under consideration by the Nye Committee. They make neutrality mandatory. They lay down the law of equal treatment of all belligerents. It can be stressed that there is at present no collective system, and all that is intended is to stay out of an evil war which hangs over Europe. But there is a collective system in the making, and while it is far from complete, we see every reason for encouraging it. Europe is pouring out its last riches for armaments, Hitler is defying the minor application of a collective system in eastern Europe, and Japan is forcing its dominion over Asia. We too want the United States to be neutral in a war forged on Hitler's anvil, or arising from Japan's penetration of Asia. We do not want our profiteers to get rich from our own war or anyone else's, since such riches turn ultimately to ashes. But we feel that the Nye bills are not as desirable as at first flush they appear. They are based on abandonment of the real principle of peace, and we prefer to keep this principle alive particularly at this time. A doctrine of neutrality adopted today, simply because a Hitler threatens Europe, will bind us effectively when, perhaps, Hitler will not be a threat, and when the weight and importance of American cooperation can count in establishing a genuine peace system.

The Nye drafts might be made more flexible by giving the President discretion in determining whether we shall assist a belligerent. Or they might specify that we should refrain, after consultation, from enforcing our right as a neutral to trade with a state which had been designated the aggressor by the League of Nations. What we oppose is a legalization of the principle that if we refuse to fight in a war we also must refuse to help one side. If ever there was a curtailment of desirable sovereignty it lies in a blank refusal to permit the United States to help a nation which, without our help, might go under. One virtue of a collective system is that it implies help, and so would make possible the maintenance of small defensive equipments. A nation should not be penalized for its reliance on its neighbors if it has lived up to its international obligations. At the same time we are just as anxious as the Nye committee that any help we give to a belligerent nation shall not involve us in fighting, and we endorse the principle that our own trade in contraband shall not be protected by our navy.

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Democratizing Health

IN voting to support compulsory health insurance just two weeks and a day after a special meeting of the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association in Chicago had reaffirmed opposition to it in all its forms, the California Medical Association has given a spectacular rebuff to the conservative leadership of organized medicine. It is the first time in this country—perhaps in the world—that an important medical group has taken such a stand and it will do something to relieve the profession in this country from the stigma of short-sighted obstructionism from which it has long suffered.

The California vote was in fact a rebuff to state as well as national officialdom. It was a successful rebellion by the rank and file of the profession that burst through the restraints of the usual do-nothing leadership. The House of Delegates voted in direct opposition to the recommendations of its own committee—save for one committeeman, Dr. Rodney A. Yoell of San Francisco. The insurgent movement was led by a delegation from San Francisco, where the cause of health insurance has been pushed publicly for twenty years by such leaders as Chester H. Rowell of the San Francisco *Chronicle* and Dr. Philip King Brown. From the public's viewpoint it is especially significant that the House of Delegates not only endorsed the idea of legislation but set up a committee with power to act in offering "its full aid and cooperation" to a committee of the California Senate which has been studying the question for the past two years. The association's position should make it possible for California legislation to avoid the mistakes and delays which have characterized the beginning of health-insurance systems abroad.

The economic causes of the California revolt were revealed in an extensive survey carried out by the state association prior to the vote. The report revealed the enormous pressure for change which has been compounded of hard times and slow payments. Preliminary tabulations from that study show only too clearly the background of need from which the demand for health insurance arises both from the public and the rank and file of the profession. The survey indicates that half the families of the State had annual incomes of less than $1,200 in 1933, while less than 3 per cent had as much as $5,000. What care people were getting depended in large part not on their need for it but on their incomes. In spite of all the efforts of public and private charity and the personal gift of services to the poor by physicians, less than half the people in the under-$1,200 families were getting the medical attention they needed. For each higher income group, the percentage getting needed care was higher, until for those with $5,000 or more it reached 92 per cent. Other aspects of the picture were the low level of doctors' incomes, the overcrowding of public hospitals, the emptiness of hospitals which had to rely on paying patients. In 1929 about 10 per cent of the doctors had net incomes of less than $2,000 and nearly half had $5,000 or more. In 1933, a third were under $2,000 and only a quarter passed the $5,000 mark.

The technical staff of the survey, headed by Professor Paul Dodd of the University of California at Los Angeles, and the advisory council of members of the faculties of six leading universities, united in recommending a comprehensive plan of health insurance mandatory for employed persons with less than $3,000 a year, and voluntary for certain groups at that income level who for administrative reasons could hardly be included at the start of a compulsory plan—agricultural and domestic workers, employees in establishments with less than three workers, and the like. For once an official body followed the recommendations of its technicians. The action of the House of Delegates specified the principles they believed essential in legislation, including the universally accepted axiom that the patient should have free choice of physician and hospital. They declared also, "The medical profession shall determine the scope, extent, standards, quality, compensation paid for, and all other matters and things related to the medical and medical auxiliary services rendered under the systems." No one can doubt the wisdom of leaving in the hands of the doctors responsibility for professional standards and procedures. Payment to physicians, however, is an actuarial matter; the profession must be consulted as to the amount that is fair and will attract the kind of doctors everyone wants to have, but final determination could no more be left to the profession than could teachers' salaries, for example, be left to educators' associations.

Planned Hunger

THE history of relief in the United States during the past five years has been one of transition from anarchy to planning. In the early days of the depression we were told that private charity was the "American way" of handling destitution. As the crisis deepened this source of funds practically dried up, leaving the burden of support on the federal and state governments. Relief became America's foremost business enterprise, the chief source of support for one-sixth of our entire population. It has been coordinated, standardized—at least in part—and placed under the supervision of the state and national governments. In other words, it has been "planned," and no one would now dream of going back to the rugged individualism of 1930-31.

Yet, despite this record of progress, relief today is still far below the minimum standards of health and decency set by charity organizations. What this means in terms of living conditions for millions of American men, women, and children is graphically portrayed in the report of Mayor LaGuardia's Committee on Unemployment Relief. Since New York's relief standards have been among the highest in the country, the conditions revealed by this survey are distinctly above the average for the United States as a whole. In New York, as elsewhere, the need for relief has greatly increased in the past twelve months. Unemployment has remained practically stationary at about one million—one-third of those normally employed—but the number of families in want has risen by over 50 per cent. Only about one-half of the 666,000 families affected by unemployment are on relief. The remainder constitute a reservoir from which new cases will continually be drawn.

Contrary to the popular impression, the amount of assistance given each family has declined as the needs have

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risen. Although relief expenditures have increased from $58,000,000 in 1932 to $159,000,000 in 1934, the monthly outlay per family has dropped from $51.36 to $42.15. This decrease has been caused partly by the larger proportion of families placed on home rather than work relief, but it is indicative of a reduction in relief standards. The committee revealed, for example, that in only one of the thirty-four precincts of the city was the food allowance adequate for the maintenance of health standards—the allotment for each person in a family of five being but 8 cents per meal. Malnutrition among school children has increased from 13.4 per cent in 1929 to 18.1 per cent in 1934.

Even where the food allowance has approached the amount set by private charity, families have frequently been forced to use part of this sum to meet the deficiency in the rent allowance. The maximum amount granted for rent by the relief authorities is $25 a month, while the average rents in most localities are from $30 to $40 monthly. And even at these levels most of the quarters available, particularly for larger families, are unfit for human habitation. An investigation of the homes of 2,201 families on relief revealed that almost half of the houses lacked ordinary sanitary facilities, and that in one-quarter of the homes there were more than the 2 persons per room permitted by the private charities. Clothing allowances have been even more miserly. In February and March, 1934, a total of $11 per family was allotted for the purchase of clothing, but from the beginning of April until the following January the total disbursements for this purpose were less than $4 per family. For job seekers this has been a tremendous handicap, and in families containing school children it has necessitated an additional drain on the sorely needed food allowance. Nothing is given from relief funds for household supplies, moving expenditures, or recreation, while the total appropriation for personal incidentals, carfare, newspapers, toilet articles, and so forth is 25 cents a family for a week. For all items, including food, clothing, housing, and other necessities, the home-relief budget for a family of five was only $12.40 a week, as contrasted with a minimum of $20.70 fixed by the various charity organizations.

Meager though this allowance is, it is princely compared to that received in many other parts of the country. The average weekly earnings of men employed on work-relief projects in the United States has declined from $12.27 in April, 1934, to $8.83 in the third week of January, 1935, and was less than $5 in ten of the forty-eight states. Kentucky occupied an unenviable position at the bottom of the list with an average of $3.96 a week. For general relief, excluding work-relief, the average for the United States as a whole was $6.66 a week, with Kentucky once more in the lowest rank with the munificent sum of $2.45 a week for each family!

The relief standards of this country continue to be a disgrace to our civilization. While the amount paid seems high in comparison to the assistance given in certain European countries, nowhere has relief been so haphazard, so unequal, and so meager in terms of the resources of the country. After five years of experimentation, first with private charity, and then with organized relief, only one conclusion is possible: The problem of insecurity can only be met by a national scheme of unemployment and old-age insurance which will pay benefits which are at least sufficient to cover the basic necessities of life. There is only one plan before Congress today which even approaches that standard —the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill (H. R. 2827).

A Modest Proposal

WHETHER we like it or not the inhabitants of the United States are growing steadily older. In 1900 slightly over 4 per cent of our population was sixty-five or more, but by 1930 this proportion had increased by about 35 per cent to 5.4. The figures were compiled by President Roosevelt's Committee on Economic Security, and according to its findings we may expect that by 1970 one person in ten will be sixty-five or more.

Even if we can accept these calculations as accurate, it is evident that Mr. Shaw's world of Ancients is still a long way off, but it does seem a pity that old people should be growing in numbers just at the time when we know least what to do with those we already have. The Greeks, for example, would have been delighted: to them age was practically synonomous with wisdom and the supply of old men seems to have fallen far short of the demand made by young ones who wanted to listen. To us, on the other hand, neither "senator" nor "presbyterian" suggests especially respectful thoughts, and old age, like so many other things which used to be considered delightful, has become mainly "a problem." Considered from the standpoint of economics, rich old men are primarily creatures whose refusal to die intensifies the process in the course of which wealth tends to accumulate in the hands of a few, and poor old men are primarily non-producers who have to be looked after. "Grandfather" no longer suggests a delightful patriarch with children clambering upon his knee but merely someone who is pretty likely to starve unless he is properly insured.

Mr. Roosevelt's committee was, of course, chiefly interested in investigating the practicality of pensions for the aged. Its figures were so discouraging that a great many persons took the opportunity to dismiss as plainly foolish all schemes of social security, but few seem to have gone on to suggest what seems to us the only logical alternative. If the aged are not to be provided for, then obviously they must be got rid of some how or other. Doctors will have to be warned to cease their pernicious efforts to lengthen the span of human life, and some provision will have to be made for disposing of those persons who persist in living on in a society which is finding less and less work for older men.

Certain civilizations more primitive than the Greek resemble ours in regarding the aged as primarily a problem, and one African tribe is said to have solved the difficulty by an institution which the enemies of insurance may well ponder. Every spring this enlightened tribe conducts its useless members to a sacred tree, from whose branches they are compelled to hang by the arms. The vigorous men then dance about in a circle singing a song which says, "When the fruit is ripe, it will fall"; and when it does the warriors apply ceremonial clubs to the skulls of their parents and grandfathers. The method seems somewhat drastic, but it is reported that the aging look forward philosophically to their natural end.

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Issues and Men

Must We Fight Japan?

THE title given to a new book by Nathaniel Peffer is "Must We Fight in Asia?" He answers his own question in the affirmative. There is no help for it; it is manifest destiny. We are reaching out for new fields for trade, and we have had our eye on the Pacific ever since 1849, when we began to lay covetous eyes upon the Philippine Islands, and ever since President Millard Fillmore explained to Congress that the reason for our being the first to recognize the independence of the Hawaiian Islands was that "they lie in the course of the great trade which must at no distant day be carried on between the western coast of North America and eastern Asia. . . . "

America, Mr. Peffer says, "is in the Far East irrevocably," if only because it has committed itself to "a perilous position in the most turbulent quarter of the globe," because of its attitude on Manchoukuo. Therefore he comes to the decision that "sooner or later America must yield, Japan must yield, or they must go to war. America accepts the fact that Manchuria has become Manchoukuo, a Japanese colony; or Japan rescinds Manchoukuo's independence and returns the territory to China—or America and Japan fight." He asserts that if we go to war with Japan, after a long struggle we shall come out of it in possession of Manchoukuo, as the Spanish War left us in possession of the Philippines, and thereafter we shall be an Asiatic power. He calls upon America to prepare for the inevitable.

Mr. Peffer admits that we have only slight trade interests in the Pacific, our mercantile investments in Asia being only $200,000,000, a sum we should spend within two weeks after the declaration of war. He admits also that Americans don't want to fight in Asia, but says that is of no importance because indifference or hostility to the war could easily be overcome by government propaganda. "No people," he writes, "can resist the compulsions of propaganda created and disseminated by a government or compact ruling group which knows what it wants and has command of the channels of opinion." So the outcome seems to him plain and inevitable. I do not deny either the gravity of the situation or the truth of what he says as to the power of a President—who is not even the whole government—to put us into war. McKinley put us into the needless Spanish War, *after* Spain had surrendered on every important point, by concealing the surrender from Congress and the people. The President has usurped the power of Congress to declare war, and by his appeals to public opinion, to a blind patriotism, and to loyalty to the flag can swing the country as he wishes.

So Mr. Roosevelt, single-handed, can put us into war with Japan if he so desires. Already he is moving in that direction. The building of a huge army air base in the Hawaiian Islands—aimed only at Japan, of course; the holding of fleet maneuvers, the largest ever undertaken in time of peace, off the Aleutian Islands; the announcement that we are to increase our fortifications in the Pacific—all these must have an immediate and powerful effect upon the Japanese. These facts, plus our refusal to let them arm to an equality with us, plus the increase of our navy to 110,000 officers and men, plus our building up to treaty limits, are all the material the Japanese jingoes and militarists need to frighten and arouse their own people: "Don't you see how the United States is planning war upon us?" If this policy continues, war with Japan will come.

But must it be? Must war come? There is no "must" about it. It need never be. The American people do not want it; they have burned their fingers too badly too recently. They have learned that victors gain nothing by their victory. They can stop the drift into war if they will. There is no such thing as a manifest destiny driving us to seek enlarged markets in China, for we are deliberately cutting off our world markets everywhere—we have just thrown away marked trade advantages in South America, and actually handed them over to Japan through our political arrogance, our invasions of foreign soil, our high tariffs, our refusal to consider Latin American needs and business conditions. We could win infinitely greater markets by simply lowering our tariffs and deliberately setting ourselves to regain and enlarge the markets we had prior to the recent economic disaster. The chief difficulty is simply that the American people no longer have any control of the war-making power. I have complete faith in their pacifist intentions, but they cannot voice their desires in the matter; they lack the referendum and the initiative, urged by both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Of course the militarists say that we can't have a referendum when the enemy is landing on our shores, but as every one of our foreign wars has been of our own seeking, and was a long time in coming on, we could in each case have obtained the views of the people. It is idle to say that a nation which created the draft machine of 1917 overnight cannot create the necessary machinery for a vote on war in no time at all. The only trouble is that we don't do it.

Yet I have tested many audiences in the last two years in many parts of the country on this proposal, and have invariably received enthusiastic applause. Isn't it time to start such a movement? Of course meanwhile we can use the time-honored methods of making our opinion against war with Japan felt. We can use our common sense in discussing the matter, and we can let the White House and the Navy Department know how we feel about it. These establishments, like our Members of Congress, are extremely sensitive to public opinion. A friend of mine wrote a vigorous protest to the Navy Department and got an early reply. Twenty thousand letters of protest would make the whole department sit up and take notice. If we do nothing at all, we, too, shall contribute to the drift into war with Japan.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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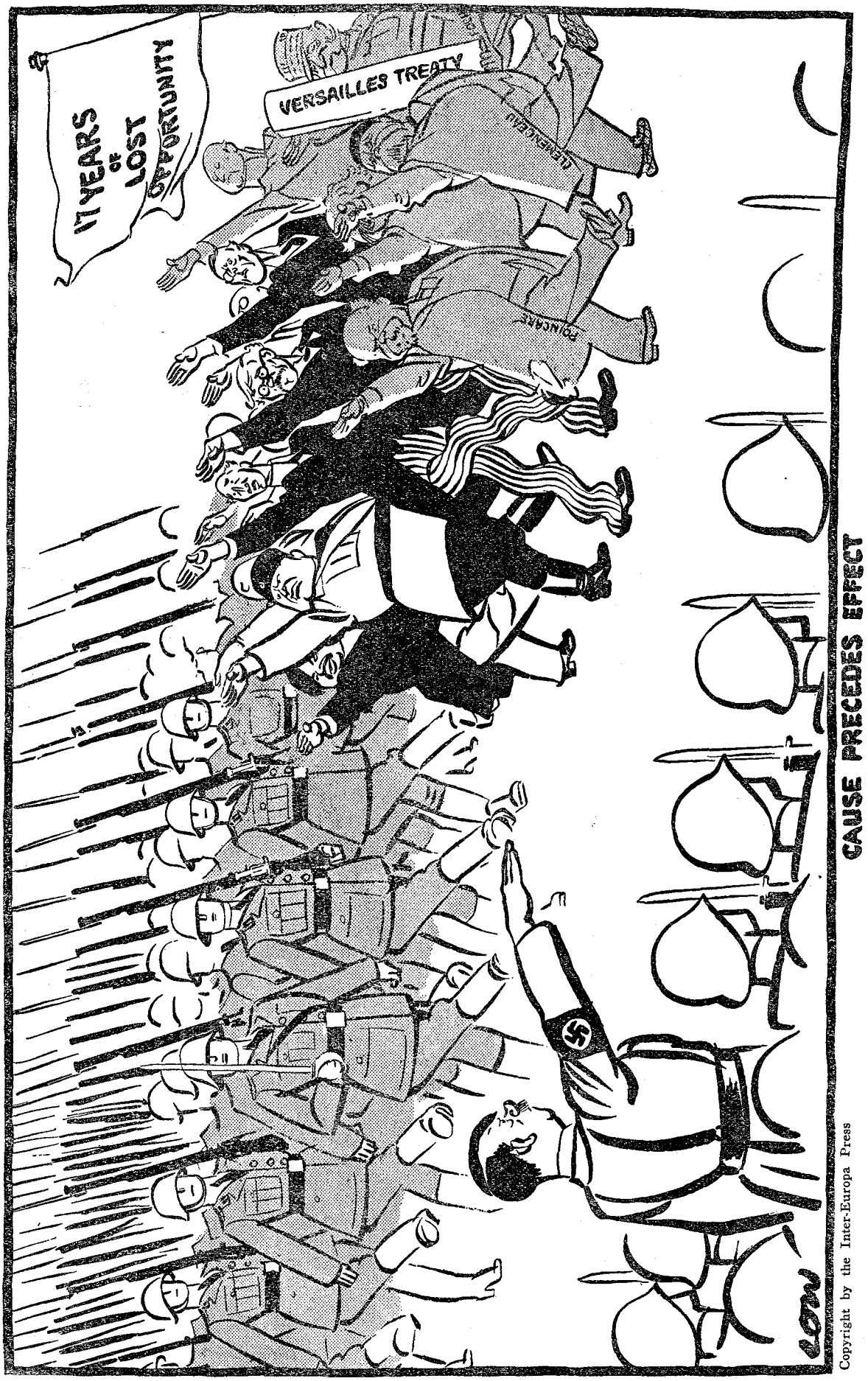

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Patriotism Dons the Black Shirt

By RAYMOND GRAM SWING

TWICE in eighteen years, once during the war, once after it, this country has seen a concerted attack on civil liberties such as is being made today. The first post-war campaign, like the present one, came in a period of economic depression, and then as prosperity returned, it frittered away. These depression experiences point the lesson that civil liberties are not the foundation of our civilization but luxuries conceded by those in economic and political control only when they feel secure. The basis of our civilization is primarily economic, and our minor cultural privileges are not fundamental rights, capable of surviving a threat of economic change. American democracy—historic Americanism—is weaker than the new Americanism of modern capitalism and nationalism.

The present campaign against civil liberties, like the preceding one, is waged under the banner of patriotism. Advocates of change in the economic order are depicted as enemies of Americanism. Undemocratic legislation is urged to persecute them. They are hounded by unofficial espionage, beaten by hired thugs, openly attacked by "patriotic" mobs. This sort of patriotism is not loyalty to a democratic system but the defense of a social order by non-democratic means. At the same time it fosters the new nationalism, which is anti-cultural and anti-intellectual in quality. In both these expressions patriotism dons the black shirt.

In saying this, I am not implying that respectable Mr. A of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, in snooping about to find what teachers in the Cleveland schools are "pink," and in submitting their names to the school board for dismissal, recognizes himself as a fascist. Nor does he consider himself a fascist in sending spies into the local unions to identify dissenting laborers so that they can be hounded out of town. Earnest Mr. B of Arkansas, who rouses an armed crowd to drive out of town the men who are organizing starving share-croppers into a union, is not a conscious disciple of Hitler. But that is only because these men do not know what fascism is. What they read about it concerns fascism in foreign countries. And they know they are not black-shirted members of a saluting army like Mussolini's or brown-shirted storm troopers like Hitler's. They do not understand that democracy is a system of peaceful change, and that unless the conflicts of society can be fought out by free criticism, free ballot, and change of the Constitution, democracy dies.

The present fight on civil liberties in the legislative field falls under five heads. The most important attack is expressed in the bill sponsored by the American Legion and the Elks, which would take the Communist Party and other parties of the extreme left from the ballot. Next in importance is the demand for oaths of loyalty from teachers and students. Then come the bills which would send to prison for a long term anyone "advocating" the overthrow of the government by force and violence, and punish with the same severity the publication or dissemination of such advocacy. A further group of bills would suppress radical propaganda among the armed forces of the government. Finally come the laws closing our frontiers to foreign propagandists of all kinds.

The entire batch of bills is phrased to suppress only those who advocate the violent overthrow of the government. And the chief argument for them is the innocent "Why not?" But a truer question is: "Why?" The government already is amply provided with defense against overthrow. No overwhelming threat of subversion has been made. True, ideas of economic change are abroad. True, a small number who recommend change belong to the Communist Party, which believes in the class struggle and teaches that capitalism will never yield its powers without a violent struggle. But this is no menace to the government. The Communist Party has perhaps 30,000 members, and if it has 300,000 close sympathizers, that would be less than one-third of one per cent of the population. Anyway, the method of repression is a dangerous one. If the extreme parties are driven underground, experience teaches that they increase in dangerousness.

The pressing question as to these laws is: "Why?" And here the answer falls into two parts. The economic order has again depressed the nation to a lower standard of life, increased its misery, and created a cry for change. The cry is not for violent change, simply change. And those who stand for the present economic order can best resist change if they can suppress civil liberties. The other part of the answer is to be found in the rise of the new nationalism. One of its facets is hostility to international fellowship and cooperation coupled with belief in armed isolation. From another aspect it is anti-individual and anti-intellectual. If they are translated into terms of American conditions there is no difference between this nationalism and Hitler's or Mussolini's. Ours has not yet evolved so far; we still have to hear the open avowal that the individual must subordinate himself for the sake of "cultural" benefits, such as discipline and national unity. It strikes a Thank God attitude that Americans are better, wiser, and more trustworthy than foreigners.

It is a temptation for some Marxists to ascribe all this patriotism to economic motives, and say it is only a disguise to assist the fight for economic control. Not everyone can agree. If nationalism is only economic in origin, why should something very much like it be found in Communist Russia? But it is not necessary to decide whether anti-intellectualism or the defense of the economic system is the motivation of patriots. In most cases it is one or the other, sometimes both. The Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, the Elks, and the Legion are probably being simply anti-intellectual, without seeing that they play into the hands of monopolistic capitalism. The chambers of commerce are grimly holding on to their economic power and do not find it unnatural to be anti-intellectual. Both are purely fascist motives, the chief point to be noted here.

Let us look at the legislative attack on civil liberties, first, at the oath of loyalty by teachers. Launching this campaign in 1931, the D. A. R. announced:

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> The departure from American ideals under the guise of liberalism, internationalism, advanced thought, and radical theories has progressed sufficiently to arouse the concern of those who believe that nationalism is synonymous with loyalty to country, and that in the adherence of youth to this ideal lies the future of America.

That campaign led to the passage of six loyalty laws; bills were vetoed in Delaware and New Mexico, and defeated in Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York. The present campaign has increased to fifteen the states which require loyalty oaths from teachers; these are California, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia.

The language of the oath in some states is in itself not patently restrictive. It exacts "respect for the flag, reverence for law and order, and undivided allegiance to the government of the United States." Here again the question "Why require this oath?" must rank before the question "Why not?" The reply is readily given; teachers are radical and are spreading radical doctrine. No doubt some are doing just that. But one could be radical and spread radical doctrine without violating the oath in any way if literally interpreted. The real answer is that the oath will not be so interpreted. The local school board will decide what radical views are consistent with the oath. In most communities a platonic approval of a system of society in which production is socially controlled would debar a teacher. Innocent as it sounds, this oath delivers up the teacher to the prejudices of the school board.

The proposed oath in Illinois (Senate 65) forbids the use of state funds by any institution which "permits any member of its staff in a classroom or elsewhere to encourage opposition or resistance by force or other unlawful means to the authority or the execution of any law of the state of Illinois or the United States." What is "to encourage opposition and resistance"? Whatever the authorities of Illinois choose to consider it. An Iowa proposal goes even farther (House 160): "It shall be unlawful for any such person [teacher] to teach or advocate publicly or privately any political, economic, or social doctrine or theory, the design, intent, or object of which is opposed to or destructive of the constitutional system of representative government of the United States." The bill does allow for study of such systems. But their very advocacy in private would be forbidden to teachers, who would become a class of intellectual slaves. The Illinois and Iowa drafts reveal the intent behind all this kind of legislation. It has the dual purpose of serving finance capitalism and nationalism. If youth is to mature believing in the existing order and in an anti-intellectual group supremacy, it must be trained young. Mussolini and Hitler know the precept. Now it is being applied here. Nothing is more profoundly anti-democratic, and yet the campaign for these laws has not swept up any great storm of protest, none at least strong enough to demonstrate the virility of the American's belief in liberty.

The bill sponsored by the Elks and the American Legion, which would keep the Communist Party off the ballot, has been passed in Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, and Tennessee. It was introduced and killed in Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming. At this writing its fate has not been determined in California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. The texts of the bills vary in detail but follow this general pattern:

> No political party shall be recognized and given a place on the ballot which advocates the overthrow by force or violence, or which advocates or carries on a program of sedition or of treason by radio, speech, or the press, of our local, state, or national government. No political party shall be permitted on the ballot until it has filed an affidavit by its officers, under oath, that it does not advocate the overthrow of local, state, or national government by force or violence, and that it is not affiliated in any way with any political party or organization, or subdivisions of organizations, which does advocate such a policy by radio, speech, or press.

This language does not define "sedition" and "treason." Its vagueness makes it possible for political parties of the right to keep all left-wing parties off the ballot, which, of course, is its real purpose.

Typical of the gag legislation before Congress is the Kramer bill (HR 4313), which has the support of the Committee on Un-American Activities, and will probably be given preference over a dozen or more similar measures. Its friends hint that this is the bill the Administration favors, but as yet there is no sign that the White House has joined the anti-intellectual red-hunt. This bill makes punishable by a fine of $10,000, by a sentence of ten years, or both, the following "criminals":

> Whoever by word of mouth or in writing advocates, advises, or teaches the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or overturning the government. . . .
>
> Whoever, with intent to overthrow or overturn the government . . ., by force or violence or any unlawful means, prints, publishes, edits, issues, or knowingly circulates, sells, distributes, or publicly displays any book, paper, document, or written or printed matter in any form containing or advocating, advising, or teaching the doctrine that the government . . . should be overthrown or overturned by force, violence, or by any unlawful means. . . .
>
> Whoever openly, wilfully, or deliberately justifies or defends by word of mouth or in writing the assassination or unlawful killing or assaulting of any officer . . . because of his official character or act, or openly, wilfully, or deliberately justifies or defends any other crime with intent to teach, spread, or advocate the propriety, desirability, or necessity of overthrowing the government. . . .
>
> Whoever organizes or helps to organize, or becomes a member of, or affiliates with any society, group, or assembly of persons formed to teach or advocate the overthrow or overturn of the government. . . .

The government is already adequately protected against any activity against its authority. The purpose of this bill is chiefly to prevent the expression of opinion, and it is so sweeping and general that it would become a crime to avow the belief in the desirability of any change if this change could be construed as entailing violence. It could be used against almost any radical political doctrine, and quite as well against almost any political action by labor. So this bill strikes the keynote of the fascist defense of the present economic system.

It is flanked by another measure which would make the armed forces of the government safe for use in industrial

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warfare. This is the McCormack bill (HR 5845), which provides a fine of $1,000 or imprisonment for two years for anyone who "advises, counsels, urges, or solicits any member of the military or naval forces of the United States, including reserves, to disobey the laws or regulations governing such forces; or whoever publishes or distributes any book, pamphlet, paper, print, article, letter, or other writing" which gives such advice. The act also permits the seizure of such literature "from any house or place in which it may be found, or from any person in whose possession it may be." The purpose of this bill is to safeguard the army and navy from Communist propaganda. But its equally obvious purpose is to make sure of the trustworthiness of the army in industrial disputes. The bill would make it a crime to advise a soldier not to shoot down fellow-citizens in civil disorders. Even a letter written by a mother to her son containing such humane advice would expose her to a two-year prison sentence.

The last word in anti-foreign agitation is spoken in the Dickstein bill (HR 5839). This provides for the shortening or termination of the lawful stay in this country "of every alien not admitted for permanent residence who while in the United States engages in the promotion or dissemination of propaganda instigated from foreign sources or who while in the United States engages in political activities." For blanket vagueness the language of this bill surely establishes a new record. What is propaganda? Would not a priest from Rome, teaching Catholicism, be deportable? Would not the visiting official, say, of the British League of Nations Union, advocating our entry into the League or a treaty of cooperation with Great Britain? Would not any emissary, soliciting funds and members for some European cultural movement? And what is political activity? A foreigner asking a question at a political meeting could be driven out of the country. Under this bill no distinguished foreign statesman could speak in public in this country unless he confined himself to non-political topics.

The lot of these bills would place the strait-jacket on all political and economic non-conformity, and would remove the nation into the most complete quarantine maintained by any country on the globe save Tibet. One might continue for pages to cite equally astonishing bills before Congress and state legislatures. There was a bill, for instance, before the Connecticut lower house (Mead, House 377) which went so far as to prohibit the preparation of *pictures* "which so advocate, encourage, or favor the overthrow or change in the form of the government of the United States." Presumably motion pictures were meant, but Assemblyman Mead was taking no chances. He included everything, down to the last subversive picture postcard and snapshot.

Not all this legislation will pass, and it is not being cited as proof that Congress and the state legislatures have gone as fascist as certain men in them. But it does show that there is a pattern in fascist action, and that in this country the pattern is being logically developed. Hardly an industrial community in the country can fail to supply its local counterpart to this legislative campaign. The two fit together into a whole; there is the local ferment of legionaries, Elks, chambers of commerce, and there is the drive against labor "agitators"—who usually are branded as aliens or Communists, whatever their citizenship or creed. And there is the national campaign for laws to curb economic and political unorthodoxy, whatever its nature. On such a foundation is the fascist state built.

NRA—Haven for Cake-Eaters

By PAUL W. WARD

LIKE one of those classic tales of pistolings that polka-dot newspaper files, the story of the NRA, if briefly told, would end with the quotation, "I didn't know it was loaded"; and the person quoted would be Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Nowhere in the New Deal's shufflings has the irresponsibility of his ministry been more manifest than in its adventure in industrial self-levitation under the Blue Eagle's wing.

Here was an attempt completely to reshape the industrial and commercial structure of a nation. Here was an undertaking that for good or ill was to affect the lives of every man, woman, and child in the United States from the delivery room to the grave. Roosevelt started it with less care and forethought than go into the arrangements for a society horse show or a heavy-weight championship fight. The result was a $55,000,000 bingo party. Wages that were to have been raised were not raised. Hours that were to have been cut were not cut. Prices that were to have stayed put soared instead. Even the Administration's claim that child labor was abolished will not bear close scrutiny.

The worst of it all is that for this mess of pottage the nation has paid a potentially enormous price. Almost every sort of device ever conceived by business men for mulcting the public—including the government and, in the long run, themselves—was given legal sanction under the NRA in trade for a shabby set of wage and hour provisions, and it is improbable that these grants will ever be rescinded. Their possessors—little business men as well as big—are prepared to fight for them as they never were prepared to fight before, and it is unlikely that Congress will deny its owners. Furthermore, the new NRA bill—secretly handed to Congressional leaders by the Administration six weeks ago and just last week forced out into the open—promises only the feeblest sort of counter-offensive. It is a more carefully drawn document than the original NRA, but like the original it remains a measure of, by, and for the New Cake-Eaters. I refer not to the slick-haired gentlemen of the Valentino era but to that legion of business men and labor leaders who, to borrow a phrase from Mr. Krutch, "hope for a better world but recoil at the idea of a totally different one." They want to have their capitalistic cake and eat it, too.

The Administration's bill is just another recipe for that inedible confection. It lays down no hard and fast rules for fixing wage and hour provisions in codes so that the worker, in truth, may gain something near to his just share

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of the wealth he produces. Similarly it lays down no hard and fast limitations upon the NRA's right to grant to industry price- and production-control privileges that take away from the worker what little he gets from the wage and hour provisions of the codes. These still would be drawn and redrawn by the horse-trading processes that produced the present code structure. Provision is made for a mandatory imposition of codes on industries refusing to submit "satisfactory" codes of their own, but "satisfactory" is nowhere clearly defined, and, more important, unlimited time is given to an industry to make up its mind to be whatever "satisfactory" means.

Because the bill probably will be passed, and because, as indicated, it leaves the form and substance of future codes to the wisdom, bona fides, and discretion of the Administration, it is important to examine how these have functioned in the past. The outlook is not a hopeful one. But for that matter neither was the outlook very hopeful when the present NRA was devised. Having begun his regime by closing and hurriedly reopening the nation's banks, Roosevelt looked around for easier ills to doctor and his eye lit on commerce and industry, then in the act of purging themselves to death. He ordered up an anti-purge and left it to Drs. Swope, Johnson, Richberg, Frankfurter, et al. to write the prescription. What they compounded was the National Industrial Recovery Act, a mélange of half-baked assumptions. It assumed the truthfulness of the sweatshop owner's chant: "I'd be glad to pay higher wages if my competitors would do the same thing." It made the equally naive assumption that there is such a thing as "fair competition."

Drawn to the homeopathic doctrine that "like should be cured by like" ("similia similibus curantur"), it was designed to "cure" the pains that the Black thirty-hour-week bill, then before Congress, was giving employers and to save the patient by aggravating his disease. Moreover, had its administrators carried out the homeopathic doctrine of "the smaller the dose the greater the effect," little harm probably would have been done. But its administrators were allopaths, and, as such, Roosevelt rolled the full prescription into one big pill, coated it with pale pink language, convinced Congress of its purity, and then tossed the pill to General Hugh S. Johnson, who, veterinarian-like, proceeded to blow it down the populace's collective throat.

What was the reaction? Well, the eventual reaction was the present bad case of chronic appendicitis in a body politic being kept alive by blood transfusions in the form of FERA and AAA doles. But the initial reaction was hot flushes in the patient and stertorous breathing by the attending interne, Dr. Johnson. In time the hot flushes subsided but the interne's breathing only grew louder. For what followed, the interne has been ready, even eager, to accept the blame, but it does not belong to him, for Dr. Roosevelt was the physician in charge, and as his assistant, Dr. Richberg, last month told the Senate Finance Committee, he made all the major decisions. It may seem at first a little unfair thus to shift the entire blame to Dr. Roosevelt, who, of course, had many other patients to attend and had to trust some interne with the case in question. But the fact remains that Dr. Roosevelt chose Johnson for the job and shared his choice's attitude that, since the patient was in a charity ward, experimentation was in order. The fact also remains that "Go ahead, Hugh" was the prescription Dr. Roosevelt left each time he visited the patient and found his interne engaged in another desperate experiment.

What followed—if an abrupt shift from medical to theatrical lingo is permissible at this point—was a species of horse opera starring the literary cavalryman, General Johnson. For a supporting cast that twentieth-century Pyrrhus gathered around himself one of the grandest collections of broken-down sales managers, market analysts, merchandising consultants, efficiency experts, and stock jobbers ever assembled at one place since the birth of Business Psychology. To end the dramatis personae at that point would be unjust, for the cast also included a few principals who had long-term contracts with big business and joined Johnson's show merely as protective agents for its angels, their employers. To the list there should be added, too, a horde of enthusiastic youths fresh sprung from academic cloisters and a squadron of liberal economists, lawyers, and statisticians, eager, like the baccalaureates, to give their all for the Blue Eagle's then seemingly sacred tail feathers. For spear carriers Johnson had the usual army corps of stenographers, filing clerks, and doormen that Congressmen produce from their elbow tips whenever a new federal agency is formed with jobs to offer.

The play has undergone but slight revisions in its two-year run but there have been many changes in the cast. Most of the aforementioned protective agents, having found there's nothing in the NRA that menaces big business, have ceased spying and gone back to their citadels. The enthusiastic juveniles have lost their enthusiasm and changed places with the spear carriers. Some of the liberal economists, lawyers, and statisticians are still doggedly giving their all, but the others have merely given up. Those who fared best were the second-rate business executives whom the depression had tossed on to the scrap heap until Johnson came along and made New Dealers of them. By judiciously placed favors in the code-making process a number of them were able to grab off creamy jobs as code-authority executives. This particular type of cast desertion became so marked at one point that Johnson had to announce that none of the persons privy to the NRA mystery could return to the Blue Eagle's holy precincts in person or by mail to lobby in the interest of his new employers. Forthwith the outgoing stream became a rivulet.

With that crew of first-aid merchants Johnson began the task of "treating a smallpox epidemic a pimple at a time," as Oscar Ameringer once bluffly described the code-making agony to a high NRA official. It would have made no difference in the resulting code structure, however, had Johnson surrounded himself with self-lubricating geniuses, for Johnson—the world's champion extrovert and probably the most unstable personality that ever swaggered, roared, and boomed across the national scene—was the law, the codes, and the code-making process. If there is any connection at all between personality and pedigree there must appear in the family tree of this blood-sweating behemoth of New Deal Holy Writ the names of Smedley Butler, "Coin" Harvey, Theodore Roosevelt I, Roger Babson, Don Quixote, Matt Woll, Aimee McPherson, Uriah Heep, and Sitting Bull. The codes he produced read like astral writings of all nine, and Johnson produced 90 per cent of the codes.

They were incredible documents produced by an incredible person in an incredible way. Advisory boards—one of

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industrialists, one of labor leaders, and one of those nebulous entities called "consumers' representatives"—were set up to aid in the formulation of the codes, but Johnson paid little or no attention to them. As a matter of fact, he had little trouble with the Gerard Swopes and Henry Dennisons of the Industrial Advisory Board, and the Labor Advisory Board, headed by Dr. Leo Wolman, was only a thorn in his lion's paw. So weak was labor organization in most industries that the labor advisers could speak with authority on only a few codes. Johnson disregarded this thunder on his left in connection with all the other codes to such an extent that Bill Green later protested in open meeting that many codes had gone through the mill marked "approved by the Labor Advisory Board" on the authority of Wolman alone. In the long run, however, the labor advisers were just another gang of horse traders. The trouble was that with two exceptions—Sidney Hillman and John Lewis—there were no David Harums in their midst.

It was the Research and Planning Division and the Consumers' Advisory Board that gave Johnson heartburn. The Research Division was supposed to provide the scientific touch, but to Johnson, the kindergarten economist, that touch was leprous. He dismissed both groups—sole NRA outposts of the Brain Trust—as "theorists" and "academicians" whenever they disagreed with his thesis that what for decades had been prussic acid so far as business and the commonweal were concerned somehow had been transmuted into aqua vitae on March 4, 1933. Johnson in those days agreed with Henry Ford that "history is bunk." He aligned himself on the side of the angels—and the canons of the United States Chamber of Commerce. Beside Johnson posed the India-rubber advocate, Mr. Richberg, with his starry-eyed gaze switching from the Supreme Court bench to the White House and back again with the rapidity of a Neon sign, while the American Iron and Steel Institute applied its Flit guns to the "ants of conscience in his pants."

So it was that, with the always obliging Mr. Richberg writing the accompanying legal patter, Johnson wrote the codes. Only one large industry came forward with a rush to be codified and that was a very sick one, the cotton-textile industry. The story of its code is the story of all the codes. It is, furthermore, a particularly choice example, not only because it was NRA Code No. 1 but also because it has been hymned ever since by both Roosevelt and Johnson as proof positive of the NRA's merits. As a matter of fact, the New Deal ended so far as the NRA was concerned the day this code was signed. One of the best codes drafted, the textile code nullified every one of the promises implicit in the NRA.

Hours were to be cut so that the industry would have to hire more workers, and wages were to be boosted so that the workers' weekly pay envelopes would be no thinner as a result of the slash in working time. You will recall the Rooseveltian promise that purchasing power was to be increased and the Johnsonian promise that the NRA was not and never would be a mere share-the-work movement. Well, in Code No. 1 hours were fixed at a maximum of forty a week, which is several hours more than the industry has at any time since been able to average. Minimum wages were fixed at $12 a week in the South and $13 a week in the North, and here again there was a catch. The public, told that no industry deserved to exist that could not pay a "decent living wage," had been led to expect that a minimum wage meant a minimum wage and, therefore, no textile worker thenceforth was to find less than $12 or $13 in his weekly pay envelope. But that wasn't what the textile code said. It prescribed payment of a minimum wage "at the rate of" $12 or $13 a week, which, coupled with the rise in living costs and the fact that the industry was not able to provide forty hours of work a week, accounts for the Bureau of Labor Statistics' subsequent report that "in the North the purchasing power of the average worker was 15 per cent less in August, 1934, than in August, 1933; in the South it was at least 25 per cent less." The bureau also found that contrary to Johnsonian promises there had been a narrowing of the spread between minimum and maximum wages in the industry, a narrowing facilitated by tricky language in the code and "interpretations" thereof issued by the code authority.

Why, then, was this industry so anxious to be codified? The answer is that textile prices were wobbling on rock bottom and the industry saw a chance to prop them up by inducing an artificial shortage of supply. It had a well-organized trade association that had been striving toward the same goal for years but had been unable to attain it because it had no punitive powers to wield against the industry's rugged individualists. In the NRA it thought it saw the whip it needed. Its visual acuity was nearly perfect. In response to the mill barons' panting petitions, Johnson decreed that thenceforth no mill should be permitted to run its looms and spindles more than eighty hours a week. Implicit in that decree, which Roosevelt blithely countersigned, was a decision that the men, women, and children of this land have all the shirts and dresses and rompers and sheets and overalls they need—or rather that they just don't need them if they haven't got a price sufficient to pay for dividends on all the watered stock and obsolescent equipment in the textile industry.

The Consumers' Advisory Board screamed, but Johnson was deaf. The Research and Planning Division was more "practical." Through some process of algebraic magic that would put Einstein to shame, it discovered the public welfare required that textile mills operate their machinery not eighty but ninety hours a week. The industry, however, wanted eighty hours and that's what it got, for Johnson, when the bosses spoke, was only a Caspar Milquetoast with a bull voice. Thus began the elaborate network of production-cutting and price-boosting artifices that Johnson, with official sanction from the White House, wrote into codes in trade for wage and hour promises so qualified by geographical, sex, population, and classification differentials and exemptions as to be almost meaningless.

So numerous were these restraint-of-trade devices in the codes that, as the Consumers' Advisory Board once asserted, the NRA in its attempt to stabilize profits has come perilously near to stabilizing poverty. The picture has only two amusing parts. One is the fact that in all but a few instances these devices didn't work; they produced only a new class of bootleggers. The other is that, though they don't work, the business men of America love them still and insist upon their retention, hoping some day to make them function. The romantic Mr. Richberg, peeping over Mr. Roosevelt's shoulder, cheers them on.

Later, when prices sagged despite the eighty-hour pro-

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vision, the textile tycoons got from Johnson one of those "emergency" decrees that fell in torrents from the NRA heaven whenever business men sent up their rain prayers. This particular decree, with Roosevelt again signing on the dotted line, temporarily sliced textile machine operations to sixty hours a week. It was granted, as were all the comparable devices in other codes, without the faintest attempt to apply social controls. And now, six months after Johnson's departure from the holy order of the Blue Eagle, that sixty-hour limitation has again been imposed and for the same reason. In the seven-man board that has just succeeded the five-man board that succeeded Johnson, the spirit of the latter-day cake-eaters, you see, is still dominant. With the exception of Dr. Walton Hale Hamilton and Dr. Leon C. Marshall, all its members are New Deal Pagliacci, watching the Roosevelt myth disintegrating about them and singing through their tears: "The show must go on."

Though they talk lyrically of striking production- and price-control provisions from the codes and improving their employment provisions generally after June 16, they know in their hearts that they will have to fight, and that Roosevelt will spike their guns just as he spiked the cannon of the five-man board on the automobile, cigarette, and telegraph codes. They have just seen the Administration dodge its only opportunity for a Supreme Court test of the NRA's constitutionality before Congress acts upon extension of the measure. In addition, they have seen America's *Führer* unflinchingly accept two reports—one from the NRA and the other from the Federal Trade Commission—saying, in effect, that the steel industry was more powerful than the government and that he dared not move to break up price-fixing in that industry even though its practices are bleeding millions in excessive prices exacted from his beloved navy.

[*The third article of Mr. Ward's series on Contemporary Washington, Roper Builds the Perfect Lobby, will appear in the issue of April 24.*]

Socialism on a Platter

By CARLETON BEALS

MEXICO is a land of millionaire Socialists. It is a land of knight-errant Marxian capitalists. It is a land where the owners of luxurious gambling dens make throbbing speeches in behalf of the proletariat. It is a land where suburban Croesuses living in fairy-like palaces damn monstrous clericalism and the harsh exploitation of human toil. It is the only country in the world where a group of powerful and wealthy political leaders in control of the government constantly express radical proletarian doctrines in Marxian clichés. The *nouveaux riches* of the revolution—those who have risen to power through several decades of bloody civil strife and who now flaunt their wealth in tasteless ostentation and the most vulgar pursuits, men who have become enterprising industrialists, owners of vast estates, managers of luxurious gambling dens, promoters of banks, and high and honored officials—are precisely the ones who insist that Mexico destroy the church, inculcate Socialist doctrines among the youth, fight foreign capital, and reinitiate the radical agrarian program which was temporarily sidetracked in 1927 by the blandishments of Ambassador Morrow.

This group of collectivist idealists, which, with the aid of Plutarco Elías Calles, controls the destinies of our neighbor country, has created for itself one of the luxurious paradises of this continent. In benign Cuernavaca, a place of eternal spring set proudly on the southern slopes of the Sierra Madre and overlooking a great valley, the successful chiefs of the Mexican revolution have laid out lovely gardens and winding boulevards, along which they have constructed their palatial homes. Nearby are the fashionable De la Selva gambling hall and dance cabaret and a new country club, also fitted up with faro and roulette tables. In the country club hangs an oil painting of Calles, first chief of the revolution, decked out in golf togs and wielding a putter. Out on the greens, so softly glowing under the Southern light, the creators of Mexico's new liberty trudge from hole to hole attended by soldiers as caddies; soldiers care for their private gardens; soldiers guard their possessions and their lives; soldiers scour the mountain road that leads to the capital as a precaution against bandits. Cuernavaca has become a fabulous show place. Maliciously the public has named the main boulevard "the street of Ali Baba and his forty thieves." This is a blow below the belt at men who are constantly devising new laws to protect the proletariat.

One impressive home is that of former President Abelardo Rodríguez, reputed to be one of the half-dozen wealthiest men in Mexico and perhaps on this continent. He has built his castle in the midst of long sloping lawns surrounded by a majestic dentated wall. He is one of Mexico's new and puissant entrepreneurs. But wealth has not dried up his great humanitarian instincts. Where else in the world would the president of a country belonging to his class put his name to a statement, as he did only a few months ago, that the only way to end war is for the workers and peasants to become sufficiently well-organized to refuse to obey the unworthy commands of their rulers? Not so many years ago Rodríguez was himself a poor workman leading a miners' strike. Not so long ago he was languishing in a Díaz prison. Obviously he could not forget such sufferings. While in office he decreed, with much socialist rhetoric, a universal minimum wage of a peso and a half a day (75 cents in gold exchange, 42 cents in actual exchange). Immediately afterward he announced that since the government had so clearly demonstrated its friendliness to the workers there was no further excuse for strikes; they would be considered anti-patriotic and seditious. Two chauffeurs, leaders in a Mexico City taxi strike, were packed off to the Islas Marías penal colony without benefit of trial to join comrades in a like predicament. Rodríguez merely insisted on gratitude for his great sacrifices in behalf of the working class.

Not long ago a financial intimate of the former President brought into existence local fascist "Gold Shirts." But the chiefs of the revolution soon saw the mistake and put

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an end to the incipient hoodlumism. In their place the erratic Oriental revolutionist and despot of Tabasco, Garrido Canabal, organized with government aid a national corps of Red Shirts to safeguard the gains of the proletariat. And Calles recently popped out of his golf paradise to visit his vast sugar estates in Tamaulipas and denounce the greedy industrialists of Monterey and their infamous treatment of their workers, though probably the wage scale in that city is higher than on Calles's own estates—some of which are worked by soldiers paid for by the government—and higher than almost anywhere else in the republic.

The inconsistencies multiply. The government maintains an enlightened crime-prevention bureau, but the high "proletarian" officials have erected a Foreign Club, at a cost of a million and a quarter pesos, which until recently closed was the most luxurious gambling joint this side of Monte Carlo, corrupting all Mexico City, draining poor employees of their wages, subverting honest cashiers, causing embezzlements and desperate suicides. In another quarter of the city the government is erecting an enormous monument to the revolution. Local wags have been asking which is the real monument, the dome at the foot of the Avenida Juárez or the Foreign Club? See what impetus the latter has given to revolutionary art, is the humorous comment. It is extremely adorned with frescoes. These may be vulgar, and pornographic, but they are in the modernistic vein.

In answer to this wasteful ostentation in a city flowing with ill-gained wealth, flooded with guzzling tourists, and prosperous in defiance of a world in depression, sinister rumblings come from the hinterland. According to the public admission of the national deputies, the church is plotting a new revolt. Once more the peasants are taking their rifles out of their thatched roofs. The workers, who have been slipping out from under the wing of the official National Revolutionary Party into more militant unions, are demanding that the government make good its promises.

Calles, his ear close to the ground, is beating the church harder and damning the unworthy capitalists. More frequently now he unburdens himself of a speech to the effect that the nation's youth must be rescued from the clutches of clericalism and inculcated with revolutionary doctrines. Here, too, the contradictions are in evidence. Many officials who are trying to destroy the church rush to have their children baptized and christened; invariably they marry in the church with great social éclat; Calles's own offspring are no exception. During the recent church strike high officials busy arresting Catholics were sponsoring secret bootleg masses for their families and friends.

Socialist instruction has been made obligatory in the schools. What for? To make misfits for a capitalist society? Who will teach the new doctrines? There are not half a dozen real Marxian scholars in all Mexico, and several of these have been persecuted. Socialists, Communists, labor leaders are to be found in the Islas Marías prison, sent there without trial. The instruction proposed "will fight to form a concept of solidarity necessary for the progressive socialization of the means of economic production." Yet in practice the government has rapidly been receding from such socialization. In agriculture it has attempted to change from a policy of collectivism to that of the inalienable family patrimony—see Article V, Clauses 50, 51, 58, and 60 of the agrarian code. "Surely," editorializes *Excelsior*, "will it not seem strange, at least to the peasants, that on the one hand the law...guarantees them a right while on the other it attempts to inculcate in them the concept that that right should be abolished?" Will the new instruction in the public schools teach that the flamboyant Babylonian resort of Cuernavaca should be collectivized as a fittingly beautiful popular resort?

An impressive monument to all the foregoing inconsistencies is the new National Theater, opened last September 29—an edifice which cost nearly ten million dollars. This vast marble structure in the spirit of the Paris Grand Opera was begun by Dictator Porfirio Díaz in the palmy foreign-loan days of 1904. Despite its impressive bulk, it is the most hideous public building in Mexico. Díaz had no illusions about the proletariat, and the theater accommodates less than two thousand spectators; it was designed for the social elite, not the mob.

What should a revolution do with such a marble palace? The government has been obliged to complete it in accordance with the original plans, except that for the proposed Carrara native Querétaro marble has been substituted, and the edifice has been topped with a lewd pinkish-bronze dome. Today, thirty years after it was begun, it is at last ready for use. What use? It is the white elephant of two confused epochs.

The barons of the revolution, anxious to prove they have no desire to monopolize the good things of life, have decreed that it be made a cultural center for the workers and peasants. Incongruities have promptly multiplied. The impressive half-million-dollar glass-mosaic Tiffany curtain is scarcely proletarian art. The paintings transferred from the decrepit San Carlos Museum to grace the new marble halls are bourgeois and ecclesiastic. Revolutionary frescoes had to be provided for proper proletarian balance. Diego Rivera, with his customary keen flare for personal publicity, is repainting, in an even less appropriate setting, the magnificent mural which was destroyed at Rockefeller Center. Clemente Orozco is straining furiously to paint something melodramatic, mystic, and revolutionary. Further to carry out the noble proletarian ideal, one wing has been utilized for a fashionable private-concession restaurant and cabaret.

Nothing could have been more ludicrous than the hair-pulling between radicals and conservatives over the opening program. The final choice was even more ridiculous than the controversy. It consisted of a symphony number specially written around a revolutionary agrarian song by the modernistic musician Carlos Chávez, buttressed by the remnants of the Pavlowa ballet made up of exiled white Russians. Local proletarians were given an opportunity to pay eight pesos a seat to see a decadent court art. Of course it would have been bolshevistic, not socialistic, to have secured fresh significant talent from revolutionary Russia. Revolutionary doctrines were further enforced by the presentation of Ruiz de Alarcon's medieval "Suspicious Truth," a play in stilted blank verse depicting the court life of Philip III. The only thing everybody was fully agreed on was that the national anthem should be sung: "Mexicans, at the cry of war . . ." No one seemed to find it paradoxical that a workers' and peasants' cultural center should be inaugurated by a function at which full dress was obligatory.

The government now finds itself saddled with a mag-

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nificent edifice that requires an annual overhead of 350,000 pesos. This necessitates charging at least eight pesos a seat for each function. The proletarian receiving Rodríguez's minimum wage must starve nearly a whole week to attend a single performance. Naturally, to fill the place the government must provide commensurately elegant entertainment, not based upon educational value for the proletariat but designed to please the sophisticated, urban, bourgeois audience.

Between such vicious spectacles as the Foreign Club and such idiocies as the new National Theater, the authentic artistic manifestations of the revolution wither away. The original afflatus in painting which produced, among others, Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros, has dried up at its source. Tourists are now bringing about the rapid commercialization and resultant deterioration of the handicrafts. Writers are equally frustrated. The government allows a few scurrilous scandal sheets to flourish, but anything serious or fundamental is suppressed. Arbitrary control is maintained over the large dailies. For instance, direct orders from a high government office prohibited any criticism of the Foreign Club. Direct orders of this sort are the rule. Hence writers who might derive some amusement from the present scene remain in the blind alley of scribbling stale blood-and-thunder chronicles of Villa and Zapata.

Thus the new wealthy industrialists and officials of Mexico continue to hand out socialism on a silver platter, a peculiarly Mexican brand of socialism, exceedingly voluble and very Fabian. But as the good suburbanites followed by their soldier caddies go swinging their golf clubs over the links of the Cuernavaca Country Club they must have painful moments of doubt. The contradictions jostle one another so vigorously and patently. The forces involved are so explosive. The whole situation is so charged with dynamite. Even the National Revolutionary Party is threatened with a dangerous split. The near future in Mexico is not at all clear.

The new regime of President Lázaro Cárdenas is at the moment stable enough. But General Cárdenas, a man who has never amassed a fortune and who has announced startling reforms, will, if he is sincere, undoubtedly crystallize the two contradictory groups within the official party into definite opposition. The retired group, including former President Rodríguez, had been endeavoring to abandon the radical slogans, concentrate upon nationalistic fanfare, and safeguard their enormous vested interests. Cárdenas, of the left wing and influenced by a militant wave of popular radicalism now sweeping all southern Mexico, has been emphasizing both nationalistic and proletarian doctrines, plus anti-clericalism. A prominent backer of his in Chiapas has even announced that the Mexican revolution, whatever that is, must be carried to the peoples of Central America. Cárdenas is patently an opportunist, but he has already shelved many powerful politicians who have had access to the honey-jar for more than a decade. Thus far he has shown surprising independence.

The issues involved are clouded by the church struggle and by the political intrigues looking toward future control when Calles will no longer be able to handle the situation. If an open schism develops it may very likely mean the end of Calles's domination over the country. That will have consequences which no one can at present foresee.

In the Driftway

NOW that the spring-and-sweepstakes season is with us once more, the Drifter is offering himself his annual congratulations on not having bought a ticket. There is, of course, something less than a single chance in a million that he would be among the winners. But even that hazard is too great. He can see the headlines now: "Drifter Wins Irish Stakes; $47,658.79 to One Who Never Had an Extra Nickel Before; Will Go Back to Work Tomorrow." Then there would be the picture of the Drifter sitting at his desk, typewriter in hand; the description of his ancestors, his early life, favorite color, pets, preoccupations; Why I Bought the Ticket; and Why I Registered It Under the Pseudonym of "Peaches."

* * * * *

THE worst part of it might very well be that he would actually go back to work on the day after attaining a fortune. All his instincts would be against it. He has never particularly liked work, although his job has been agreeable enough as jobs go; he has always welcomed a holiday, and has invariably looked forward to Sunday, his hankering for the day of rest beginning at about eight o'clock on Monday morning. In short, he has resembled the man who, when asked by the kind old lady if he wanted a job, answered: "Well, no, ma'am. Not if I can get anything else to do." But once a sweepstakes winner, or the heir of an unknown uncle, the pressure of public opinion might be too much for him. Every heir is expected as a matter of course to protest that the new wealth will make no difference in his life. He will just keep right on sweeping out the cellar at Mr. Finkelbaum's place and will put the money in the bank against a rainy day. In books, to be sure, there are stories about heirs who were driven daft by their sudden good fortune, and who ran through the money in six weeks, squandering it on Wine, Women, and Gold-plated Steam Yachts. But this does not happen in real life. The Drifter, with all the will in the world to do a little squandering, would probably spend the rest of his days worrying for fear he would lose his bankbook.

* * * * *

NOT long ago the Drifter undertook to explain, in very simple language, our modern system of money and credit to a boy of nine. The child listened respectfully to a discourse on what money is, and how governments must exchange goods or their money does not mean anything, and why France and England do not feel obligated any longer to pay their debts to the United States, and a number of other abstruse matters that the Drifter himself did not understand very well. He explained that a very few persons are extremely rich, a somewhat larger number are moderately well off, and incomparably the largest part of mankind is in a state ranging from honest poverty to destitution. When he had finished, the boy thought it over for a while. Then he said: "Why wouldn't it be better if there just wasn't any money, and everybody could get enough to eat and clothes to wear and a bed to sleep in from the government by working for it?" The Drifter indicated that some such scheme, only slightly less drastic, was being tried out in certain parts

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of the earth and projected for others. The boy had one thought to add: "I think people would probably have a better time without any money," he said.

* * * * *

THIS is precisely the Drifter's case. He is sure he would have a better time if he could think of some way to live without even the money he has. Although he would reserve the right to grumble about it, he would be willing to continue working every day, secure in the knowledge that he and every one of his fellow-citizens would be fed, clothed, and sheltered. He honestly believes he would prefer this to winning several dozen sweepstakes or inheriting any number of millions. He will doubtless not see such a world; but there is just a chance that the nine-year-old boy may.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

On Reorganizing the NRA

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In connection with your recent comment on the NRA it seems to me that there is a lack of general understanding of some simple but fundamental concepts regarding it. The Senate hearings have been full of such a mass of controversial detail that it is difficult to relate the present discussion to the national problem. To clarify my own thoughts on the subject, I have tried to bring them into focus.

Breakdown of public confidence in the NRA came from a combination of three interrelated factors which resulted from the attempt to organize a new and highly complex social-industrial order on the spur of the moment. The first centers in the general problem of compliance. Under the NRA, when public opinion demanded compliance, consumer interest was high. There was a general resemblance in the make-up and organization of compliance boards to the old draft boards, and the problem in general was similar—that of applying general regulations to particular local individuals. The soundness of this form of organization springs from the local economic interest in provisions affecting hours, wages, and child labor. Wherever compliance broke down, consumer interest collapsed. There were two general aspects of failure to get compliance: (1) unfortunate selection of compliance-board personnel, (2) failure of regional and national headquarters to support decisions of good boards, and keep them advised of progress in Washington. Thus the breakdown resulted directly from unfortunate favoritism in some cases and, more important, from the disillusionment of high-minded local leaders when they realized the futility of their painstaking work.

The second reason for breakdown is reflected in the general charge that the NRA has set up a bureaucracy which is not only irksome, cumbersome, and ineffective, but in some respects resembles a racket. The alleged stifling of small enterprises, the complications of price agreements, and dissatisfaction over special considerations have combined to dampen the enthusiasm of the ordinary business man. The third reason centers in the labor-relations problem and the conviction that Administration promises made in Section 7-a have not been kept.

If public interest is to be reawakened there must, as you say, be courage and leadership, and it must be along these three lines. But first we must examine our whole industrial problem in the light of mechanization and its consequent displacement of workers. From this we must determine a policy, and until we have it, all other forms of planning are merely temporizing expedients.

We are definitely confronted with the alternatives of the policy of the annual wage or that of reduction in hours, as expressed in the thirty-hour week. But these two lines of thought are quite divergent. We must think through the implications of an industrial order based on an annual-wage program, particularly as to the probability of its creating an "economy of abundance," with a consequent lowering of prices and readjustment of fixed capital. The other solution, the "thirty-hour week," is opposite in its effect, tending toward maintaining and raising existing hourly rates, restricting production, and maintaining or increasing the price level of industrial goods.

Assuming that this broad investigation is under way and that its implications are appreciated, we can proceed to attack the mechanics of the NRA itself. To reawaken consumer interest, let us restore enforcement of hours, wages, and child-labor provisions to local authorities, preferably through properly selected voluntary boards or through proposed labor-merchants relations courts. This is essentially a local or community problem. To regain support of business men, let us simplify and consolidate codes, eliminate price provisions except for some of the necessaries of life, abolish code authorities, revitalize trade-practice agreements under Federal Trade Commission control, and scrap those in codes.

The worker's interest in the NRA can be revived only by honest and effective enforcement of wages and hours provisions in codes. And it undoubtedly will come if, as now seems probable, the Wagner labor-disputes bill is passed.

Washington, March 25 JOHN M. MARLINGHAM

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Mr. Sifton Still Pickets

To the Editors of The Nation:

In *The Nation's* editorial of February 6 on Picketing Playwrights, you said that "during the present and preceding seven seasons" the Theater Guild had produced twenty-seven plays by American writers and that "eight of these were by dramatists whom the Guild was introducing for the first time to a New York audience."

In my letter of February 27 I used the time limit and the method of counting by plays employed in the editorial. My count was twenty-three American plays, of which three were "by dramatists whom the Guild was introducing for the first time to a New York audience."

Joseph Wood Krutch, in his letter of March 13, takes in an extra season in order to make the editorial's figures stick —going back to *the eight preceding seasons and the present season*—and so brings in S. N. Behrman's "The Second Man." Instead of counting plays, as was done in the editorial and in my letter, he counts playwrights—each collaborator separately. Being still one shy of the desired total of eight, he drags in Arthur Guiterman, although the Guild lists Molière as the author of "The School for Husbands." (Had the Guild listed Guiterman as the author, it would have had to list his collaborator, Lawrence Langner, thereby violating an old Guild tradition that plays by Guild directors shall never be produced by the Guild.)

Sometimes when a small-town pool shark finds that his ball is frozen to another, he casually moves it half an inch and thereby gets a clear shot to the corner pocket.

As the saying goes, No dice, Mr. Krutch!

New York, March 14 Paul Sifton

[Mr. Krutch in his letter does count dramatists rather than dramas. His count is based upon the record of the last eight seasons exclusive of the present one, but the question of whether or not that means "eight seasons and the present season" is purely academic since there were no "new playwrights" this season. We see nothing wrong in counting Mr. Guiterman, whose "School for Husbands" is more than a mere translation. —Editors The Nation.]

Contributors to This Issue

Paul W. Ward is a Washington correspondent of the Baltimore *Sun*.

Carleton Beals has spent the greater part of the past fifteen years in Mexico and South America. He is the author of "Mexican Maze," "Banana Gold," "Porfirio Díaz," and, most recently, "Fire on the Andes."

Heywood Broun, the well-known columnist of the *World-Telegram*, is president of the American Newspaper Guild.

Clara Gruening Stillman is the author of a biography of Samuel Butler.

R. P. Blackmur contributes reviews and criticism to various literary periodicals.

Mary McCarthy frequently reviews fiction for *The Nation*.

Eda Lou Walton, a native of the Southwest, is associate professor of English at Washington Square College, New York Universtiy.

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Labor and Industry

Field Notes from Arkansas

By JOHN HERLING

New York, March 29

HERE are three telegrams which came from northeastern Arkansas on successive days.

W. H. Stultz president of union warned to leave Poinsett County within twenty-four hours by band of vigilantes. Stultz and Pickering arrested on charge of accusing two planters of shooting up Brookins's home. Brookins escaped armed band who riddled his home with bullets. Housekeeper and child saved by hiding under bed. Brookins safe in hiding. Six carloads of planters waited for Mitchell Kester and Paramount News man near Tyronza all day Tuesday. Desperate reign of terror beginning. Bring all pressure to bear on all possible government agencies. Only U. S. intervention will prevent violence. Carpenter reports Stultz and family safe; also advises that the roads are not safe for us to travel.

Inform us time arrival. McKinney threats lynching. Advise McKinney remain city. Wired Costigan Congression investigation. Meeting union hall broken up by officers last night. Stultz forced flee after open death threats. . . . Roads unsafe Buck Mitchell travel. . . .

Negro member almost beaten to death on Chapman Dewey plantation. Armed band shot into Carpenter's home last night. Member Ollie Bell given twenty-four-hour notice to leave Marked Tree. Automobiles with armed men drove all night around Stultz's home. Thirty armed planters' deputies try break up meeting of eight hundred union men at Wynne. Carpenter's son Francis driven off highway and injured. Deputies stop J. O. Green, organizer, from getting on bus en route Memphis. Entire population terrorized.

The names in the telegrams are the names of brave men in the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union under attack by the armed planters and their representatives in northeastern Arkansas in the counties of Poinsett, Mississippi, and Crittenden. The president of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, W. H. Stultz, is an Arkansas share-cropper. Before share-cropping in Arkansas he tried to eke out the same kind of a living in Tennessee. His wife and six children and all their belongings were thrown out on the road last December because he joined the union. He is the elected leader of more than six thousand share-cropper families organized into the union. Long and lean, quiet and self-effacing, except when it is necessary to talk back to planters who for months now have tried to beat him down, Stultz leads his committee, collecting affidavits as to evictions which are mounting daily, and maintaining the union morale. He does not deliver long speeches. He wants to get goin', wants to sign them up. He is a former school teacher. He was told to get the hell out of Marked Tree, union center in Poinsett County, and informed by two planters—their names are Frazier of Tyronza and Bradsher of Marked Tree—that they would see to it that "his brains were blown out and his body thrown into the St. Francis River." Last November Bill Stultz was put in jail and kept there for forty-five days for signing share-croppers into the union. The charge was "interfering with labor."

Ed Pickering, now arrested in Arkansas, was one of the three share-croppers in the delegation which came north to tell organized labor and sympathetic persons about their union. He is an agricultural worker, whose wages average 60 cents a day, and is president of the Post, Arkansas, local of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

Thirty-two bullet holes were found in the walls of the shack belonging to A. B. Brookins, sixty-five-year-old Negro preacher, song leader of the union. The attack on his home was made at 2 o'clock in the morning by carloads of planters' deputies. Mr. Brookins led his people in song in a tightly packed union hall at Marked Tree the night Norman Thomas spoke there two weeks ago. Men, women, and children were crushed together, so that the walls of the hall seemed too frail to stand the strain. Kerosene lamps gave an insufficient, smelly light, while Brookins's hands were weaving shadows against the wall as he led their song: "Though we are evicted we shall not be moved, Just like a tree planted by the water, We shall not be moved." Brookins was jailed along with Stultz last November on the same charge—interfering with labor.

Howard Kester and H. L. Mitchell are field organizers. Mitchell, son of a share-cropper, has lived in Poinsett County eight years. When he began the campaign for the union last spring, he was run out of a small pressing and dry-cleaning business he owned. Thus far the planters have been afraid to touch him. He organizes the defense when share-croppers are arrested. He arranges for bail, if possible locally, and now that local resources have been exhausted he tries to reach people in the North and Middle West. He sends out appeals for relief, distributes it, patches up differences when they occur. He has moved his family to Memphis, forty miles away, as threats were being made against them in his absence. He has sought desperately to get the governor of the state to do something about relief, about evictions, about preserving order in Poinsett County, where the nights are being made hideous by the night-riding planters and their deputies. Mitchell is a marked man. Norman Thomas and Mitchell went to see Governor Futrell two weeks ago. "You can't go around preaching social equality in the state of Arkansas, nor economic equality either," the governor declared.

Kester, with Mitchell, works insanely long hours. While the terror goes on he sees to it that evicted families are somehow taken care of. When I was there two weeks ago, we came upon an evicted family along the road from Marked Tree to Lepanto. Two wagons filled with riding bosses and a sheriff's deputy hurried off as we approached. Five children from four to seventeen years of age and the family belongings had been left on a mound of dirt beside the ditch. The family had a good American name, McCul-

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lough. There were three rusty bed springs, two small tables, three broken chairs, a four-cap pug stove, one mattress, two shuck beds, three or four plates, two china cups and saucers, two knives and forks. In a crate were two small hogs and some chickens, which the family had to fight hard to take with them. Why were they evicted? They were thrown out of their miserable shack first, because they belonged to the union, second, because the father of the family was charged with having stolen two eggs (he had been beaten up for this alleged crime by the riding bosses), third, because the summer before their fourteen-year-old daughter had been carried off for three weeks and raped by at least two of the riding bosses on the Howington plantation. The McCullough family tried to recover their daughter, attempted to have some kind of action taken in the courts against the riding bosses. That was unpardonable. Who had ever heard of a share-cropper getting the law on a riding boss for the rape of his child?

They showed me the relief they had just received for the month: one twenty-four-pound bag of flour, one twenty-four-pound bag of meal, eight cans of evaporated milk, five tins of beef, some sowbelly, "with the tits still on it," as they describe it. This was all, they were told, for the month. Howard Kester has charged discrimination against union members by the relief administration in the state. The state head of relief is W. R. Dyess, himself a planter from Mississippi County, one of the worst areas in Arkansas. In response to these charges, Mr. Dyess announced he was going to investigate his own administration. Kester has asked Harry L. Hopkins to intervene but so far he has had no response.

The lawyer for the union, C. T. Carpenter, has lived in Arkansas a good part of his life. He takes Jeffersonian democracy seriously. He believes in the Bill of Rights. He believes that the union has a right to exist. In becoming its attorney, in defending Ward Rodgers in the "anarchy" case and the barratry cases, and in exposing other trumped up charges, he has earned the enmity of the planters and business men upon whom a lawyer must depend for a living. His practice is shattered; his home is attacked; his life is threatened. He fights on, a bulwark of strength for share-croppers.

The planters who drove Norman Thomas, Howard Kester, H. L. Mitchell, and myself from Birdsong in the middle of March were drunk and armed. They shoved us around, sought to find some excuse in a gesture from one of us to start shooting. This was three days after the Governor had said the union couldn't get away with preaching social and economic equality. An Associated Press man who was with us at Birdsong, trying to preserve the impartial attitude of the news gatherer, stuck his hand out and introduced himself to the leader of the gang. "Go on, you son of a bitch," he was told, "get the hell out of Mississippi County."

An appeal taken against evictions in the Supreme Court of the state was lost on March 25. The contract between the federal government and the plantation owners was declared to be without respect to the share-cropper. He and his family, the court said, were free to go or stay. They are therefore evicted, it appears. President Roosevelt has turned over all protests made to him by Norman Thomas, by the union, by hundreds of organizations, to Henry Wallace, who turns them over to Chester Davis, who refused to intervene in a situation directly caused by the policies of the AAA as described some weeks ago in *The Nation* by Professor Amberson.

White Collar Into Plume

By HEYWOOD BROUN

THE Newark *Ledger* strike began on November 17 and ended on March 28 with a substantial victory for the Guild. I do not think that anybody can question the success of the settlement achieved by the white-collar union even though it did not gain its entire list of objectives. There may be some criticism of the fact that the fate of eight employees, who were originally discharged, was left to arbitration, but any agreement which provides for the return of all strikers and the discharge of strike-breakers deserves to stand as a labor triumph.

This is particularly true in the case of a battle which lasted approximately eighteen weeks. It is almost axiomatic that strikes are won in a brief time or not at all. The employer in most disputes is better equipped with the sinews of war, and it is extremely difficult to maintain morale through the long grind in which the worker must watch his slight resources dwindle into nothing and then begin to mount as debts.

In Newark it was necessary to urge striking Guild members not even to accept wholly honorable jobs which several could have found on other papers. In order to maintain a strike it was necessary to have strikers. Another difficulty lay in the fact that save for a very short period it was impossible to cripple the *Ledger* to a point where it could not appear. Indeed, even if the Guild possessed this power, such a result might have been harmful rather than otherwise. After all, there was no desire to ruin the property. There had to be a place to which the strikers could return after winning. Moreover, even a curtailment in the paper's regular appearances would have threatened the jobs of union printers, stereotypers, press men, and photo-engravers. And naturally the good will of organized labor was vital to the Guild in its strike.

Looking back on it all it seems to me that the local leadership of the Newark Guild under Crozier, Ring, and the rest was highly efficient. Strikers always ask for public sympathy but in certain instances it is not of very much help to them if it can be gained. The general public, for instance, cannot help steel workers by resolving to buy no steel rails during the course of the dispute. But in Newark an effective part of the public could and did stop buying the *Ledger* while the hostilities were on. This was the constant factor in the attack of the Guild.

Picketing, of course, played its part, particularly under the plan of Peters, but it seemed to me that its chief usefulness lay in keeping up the morale of Guild members. An

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injunction which gravely restricted this activity for almost three weeks did not gravely affect the pressure of the public. As a matter of fact, the injunction turned out to be the most useful thing which could have happened. It advertised the fact that the strike was still on and that it was hurting the circulation and revenues of the paper. Up to that time the publisher had been maintaining that the Guild activities were helpful to the *Ledger* rather than otherwise. Marlen Pew, of *Editor and Publisher,* who stresses his passion for accuracy, fell for this particular dodge, hook, line, and sinker.

The night the injunction came out all the strikers and a number of kibitzers, including your correspondent, wanted to go to jail. One of the strikers suggested that all the *Ledger* men go to jail, refuse bail, and remain in prison till the strike was won. Abe Isserman, the highly efficient counsel for the Newark strikers, hailed this as infantile romanticism and put his foot down against it. Mr. Isserman, also, kept me out of jail in the days which followed. He didn't object to my going, but it was his wise notion that it would be harmful rather than otherwise if it savored of being a stunt. However, he did give me one assignment which I chose to regard as perilous even though I never had the chance to carry it out. When the first hearing on the temporary injunction was held, Isserman and Morris Ernst both advised me to appear as counsel in my own behalf.

"Be perfectly polite to the Vice-Chancellor," ran my legal instruction, "but criticize the whole policy of anti-labor injunctions as severely as you can."

"The judge," I suggested, "could just reach down and slap me for contempt, couldn't he?"

"He might."

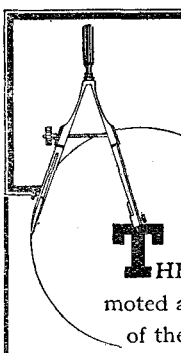
"Well, what's the most I could get?" I asked with pardonable curiosity.

"There isn't any limit," said the lawyer. "The longest sentence in New Jersey that I can remember was three and a half years but that was complicated with embezzlement. Ninety days would be possible but thirty would be about right."

"If that happens while I'm acting as my own counsel, have I a right to say, 'Your Honor, I now think I'd like to get myself another lawyer'?"

But the issue never came up. I had myself set for an intense and earnest plea, polite but biting, when the question of an adjournment arose. "Please let's go ahead with it now," I pleaded when we lawyers for the defense went into a huddle. I was overborne by weight of counsel. On the following Tuesday I trained again for the ordeal. This time things moved so fast and so favorably that allied counsel didn't want to have me talk at all. At the very end I was ordered, "Get up and make a few humorous remarks."

It all ended with counselor and court laughing at each other's gags. And I, who had been eager to play Hamlet, ended up doing Falstaff as usual. However, this must be set down among the minor tragedies. The strike itself had a happy ending, and P. W. Chappell, the federal mediator, forced me to nibble a few of my words in which I had maintained that no good thing could come out of Washington. The principle remains the same, however. The strength of a labor group remains within its own hands. No sort of legislation will work for weak unions. "Them as has gets."



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Books, Drama, Films

"Rollo's Wild Oat"

The Curtain Falls. By Joseph Verner Reed. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.75.

CLARE KUMMER once wrote a play called "Rollo's Wild Oat." Its hero was a mild young man whose only indiscretion arose out of his desire to act in "Hamlet," and without meaning any disrespect, I must confess that Joseph Verner Reed's account of his experiences on Broadway makes me think of Rollo. Mr. Reed was a baa-lamb ready for the fleecing, and he ought to thank whatever gods may be that he fell into the hands of Kenneth Macgowan, who may have helped him lose his money but who at least lost it honestly.

Mr. Reed liked the theater and he did not like Wall Street, to which he was destined by birth and position. Had he been less well-endowed with the world's goods he would probably have contented himself with an encyclopedic grasp of the kind of information retailed in the columns headed "Broadway Notes," but since he had more money than he knew what to do with he decided to go back stage. Like most rich people he wanted very much to be loved for himself alone, and accordingly he made desperate efforts to get a job which he would be paid for. Being signally unsuccessful in that effort, he finally succumbed to the inevitable and financed the firm of Macgowan and Reed. The firm produced a number of plays—all of them respectable and at least two of them very good indeed—which somehow consistently failed to make money, and it was finally dissolved. Then, after a few more discouraging experiences, Mr. Reed came to a conclusion which seems to an outsider to have cost rather more than was absolutely necessary. He realized that he had no very insistent desire to produce plays, that he had thoughtlessly mistaken a spectator's delight in the theater for a vocational "call," and that it was, after all, more fun as well as a good deal cheaper to pay even speculators' prices for a pair of tickets than to foot the bills of production.

Considering what his wild oat cost him, Mr. Reed writes with admirable good humor. There is also something so engagingly guileless about the whole tale that it makes very entertaining reading. He remained to the end essentially an amateur, but he had purchased at a considerable price a great deal more inside knowledge than the amateur usually has. The result is that he can give a fresher picture of the reckless and wasteful methods of the theater than can be achieved by those who are thoroughly inured to them. Incidentally he draws portraits of Jane Cowl and Mary Ellis that are very nearly masterpieces of devastation without malice, and in the case of the second he evokes a vision of sharp claws and flying fur which is quite unforgettable. But perhaps, after all, the best thing about the book is the proof it adduces of a fact upon which I have long insisted—namely, that those who diagnose the theater's ills as "commercialism" pay it an undeserved compliment. Whatever its methods may be they are certainly not "business-like," and if the typical producer in the throes of production is proceeding on the lines of efficient commercial enterprise, then a drunken sailor is calculating and miserly.

Apparently Mr. Reed realizes that things might have been worse—artistically at least. His firm was responsible for "Spring Time for Henry," one of the funniest farces of a decade and one which ran for twenty-four weeks even if, for unexplained reasons, it "made practically no money for Macgowan and Reed." It was also responsible for "Children of Darkness," which lasted only a short time and added its contribution to the year's deficit of $81,000. Mr. Reed professes to have been almost satisfied when he read some time later George Jean Nathan's opinion that "Children of Darkness" was one of the two not completely contemptible plays of the year. A more positive way of saying the same thing would be to announce that it is probably the best comedy ever written by an American.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

First Gentleman of France

Francis the First. By Francis Hackett. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

AT the beginning of this brilliant study of Francis I, Mr. Hackett pays his respects to "the power historians who rule out the human being." Francis alone was nothing, he says; you can see his like any day on a Parisian boulevard with a blonde girl at his side, but "as the head of a European state with millions in his power, his intrinsic character becomes too important in its tiniest details to be veiled." That character grew out of the French tradition, which is Latin but not profoundly Roman like the Italian (Machiavelli never could understand the frivolity of the French), and this kinship and the nearness to Italy were among the factors that made the approach of Francis to his problems different from those of his contemporary Henry VIII. For one thing he did not marry his mistresses. Some of his problems, of course, were different. The French Parlement, for instance, could be stepped on with ease. Francis was temperamentally as well as locally close to the Italian Renaissance, in his passion for magnificence, his interest in every art. He could "think in stone," as the magnificent chateaux testify that rose one by one at his will "as candles are lit on an altar." As the cultural Renaissance died in Italy it was born again at his court. This book is not only a study of Francis, but of France and Europe in his time, in which all aspects converge in the terrific struggle for power, the birth throes of the modern state, between dynasties and nations, churches and states, popes, princes, and parliaments, great forces crossing, recrossing, everything fed into the ceaseless mill—love, friendship, motherhood, children, wealth, youth, integrity, life. This fundamental conflict is the warp as personality is the woof of this splendid tapestry, personality vividly conceived, subtly conditioned. And personality arises not only in Francis but in those who molded him, his mother and sister first of all, in a great frame of French tradition, and those who express for us the age—Luther, Erasmus, Calvin, Rabelais, Machiavelli, and Leonardo already somewhat ghostlike.

We are introduced first to France before Francis is born, a web of dynastic intrigues, in which various spiders watch each other warily, the greater gradually gobbling up the lesser, by marriage, war, murder, trickery. Babes are betrothed in their cradles to mature men, cripples forced on the strong so there shall be no offspring, pacts cemented and broken. The death of a child causes shudders of joy in a remote province, for now the child of another house draws nearer to the throne. Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis, came to the house of her husband, Jean D'Angoulême, a child of eleven, and was kindly received by his mistress and three illegitimate children. He died, having given her Francis and Marguerite, and now she became a spider in her turn, the concentrated mother of a male of destiny. She lived only for him, watching, intriguing, trembling, "brimming with management." And Marguerite too lived only for him, making two loveless mar-

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riages for his advantage, loving him a shade too much, subordinating her finer soul. He was woman-made, spoiled, vigorous, unscrupulous, charming, relying always on his power to seduce in politics as well as elsewhere, until stronger action became necessary, when he stopped at nothing.

He had to have Milan and he poured the wealth of France into the war. There was never enough money; it had to be squeezed out of the ground, out of estates, churches, and taxes on food and other necessaries, endlessly multiplied. At first it was all glory and intoxication, but after the losing fight with Charles for the empire and his imprisonment after Pavia, his personal disintegration, exemplified by handing his young children over to Spain as hostages, became hideous. He was orthodox again for wholly unorthodox reasons, so that the Sorbonne, after a lull, became active in the persecution of heretics. He needed the church then and would not interfere, even though Marguerite still timidly pulled at his sleeve in attempted intercession. She had been successful before, but now the current was too strong. Had she not been the King's sister she herself might have suffered for her tolerance and her interest in forbidden doctrine. Still she remained subject to him in devotion and love, seeing him, in spite of everything, great and good.

In the end the great lover and fighter, the first gentleman of France, had become a seedy old gallant. "Le vieux galant s'en va," they said, as he lay dying. But he had tightened absolutism on France, and what he had been and what he had done would persist for centuries.

There are certain passages that remain with one like a thing experienced. Such are the ride into Paris of young Francis, newly crowned; the description of Chambord; the scattered pages that make up the portrait of Marguerite; the fleeting glimpse of young Calvin, the sallow, sickly boy, rising at four for a long day of study, floggings, and prayers in the dirty old seminary at Paris that Erasmus had hated; but most striking of all, the contrasting portraits of Erasmus and Machiavelli. This is great writing. Of larger episodes there is the profoundly typical story of the Constable of Bourbon, driven to treachery by well-grounded fear of treachery against himself, the rather weary shamefacedness of the "Ladies' Peace," and much else. The splendid pithy prose, the brief masterpieces of characterization, the vivid present sense of place and mood make this book a well of pure enjoyment, a book to be returned to and cherished.

CLARA GRUENING STILLMAN

The Imagination Crowned

Coleridge on Imagination. By I. A. Richards. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.75.

THERE is a sense in which every forward movement of the mind is saltatory, a leap in the dark, and another in which it seems no more than the exhilarating rediscovery of the commonplace. Which quality seems dominant depends on whether your interest is dramatic or speculative, whether you use a technique of intuitive perception or a technique of logical manipulation; but both qualities will be inextricably present in work approaching the first order. In Mr. Richards's study of the imagination it is the exhibited rediscovery that Coleridge meant what he said and that the meaning is literally inexhaustible which represents the speculative quality; and it is Mr. Richards's repeated declaration of faith in the poetic imagination as man's chief coordinating instrument that gives the book its passionate quality of importance.

The doctrine is simple and requires only a preliminary willingness to make it acceptable. Coleridge defined the primary imagination as the agent of all perception; the secondary imagination, which was an echo of the primary, was that faculty which recreated the perceptions and made them vital. When imagination is operating, the mind is growing, latent possibilities are called up, and the parts of a meaning mutually modify each other and make a new meaning, which is inexhaustible. The notion of fancy was introduced by Coleridge, and is so used by Mr. Richards, to represent those operations of the mind which reassemble perceptions without modification or growth. Imagination is thus the animating power, the coadunating, gestatory power to bring knowledge into being.

There will be few perhaps besides poets and serious readers of poetry who can turn to poetry as the principal source of order and value. Yet Mr. Richards's plea is best addressed to those who will never hear it, to those absolutists who use poetry either as a persuasive prop for dogma already prejudiced or as an escape for the mind from the burden of intelligence. Mr. Richards's imagination is above all rational, and has as an end in view the discovery and realization of human values, and not their prediction or their denial. He has exaggerated the bearings of his concept and made it paramount beyond practical possibility, but no more so than rational concepts of God or state or physics have often been made. It is only by such exaggeration that the emphasis of proportion may be secured. The objections of T. S. Eliot that poetry cannot be substituted for religion and of Max Eastman to the endless thread of psychological dialectic in which Mr. Richards winds his theory, though sound, hardly matter if we consider that Mr. Richards is merely working his concepts for all they are worth. Rather than argue where justice lies, I prefer to suggest in illustration by what acts of imaginative attention the reader may do Mr. Richards justice for himself.

In discussing the types of response to nature, he sets passages from Wordsworth and Hardy beside one another "as a short way of stating the most comprehensive problem of philosophy."

> But in doing so [he goes on], in making this use of them, we wrench both passages from their original and proper functions. The study of this wrenching, of the translation of imaginative acts into doctrines, is that mode of tracing the sources of philosophy in "facts of mind," which, in Coleridge's view of 1801, was to make the theory of poetry "supersede all the books of metaphysics and all the books of morals too."

From the argument on the relation between poetry and myth I take two sentences:

> Without his mythologies man is only a cruel animal without a soul—for a soul is a central part of his governing mythology—he is a congeries of possibilities without order and without aim. . . . If we try to take more from the myth than we put into it we violate the order of our lives.

Lastly, I extract these sentences written against A. E. Housman's assertion that Blake's "Hear the Voice of the Bard!" contains only embryo ideas:

> Is it not equally likely that the ideas from which this poem derives its mysterious grandeur are not less but more fully developed as we receive them in the poem? I would suggest seriously that in the greater poems of great poets the ideas there brought into being in the mind are completer, not less complete; and that the process which extricates them by abstraction denatures them rather than develops them. . . . In the poem they are autonomous, sanctioned by their acceptability to the whole being of the reader. Out of the poem, they are doctrine merely, and a temptation to dispute.

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The book as a whole is only a chapter in Mr. Richards's long approach to the uses of language and the meaning of poetry. The approach is multiple and repetitive; and this all the more necessarily because—as he has amply demonstrated here and elsewhere—even the best-trained readers read ill and ignorantly. And it is natural that at many minor points of argument and statement correction, expansion, and modification may seem necessary; but we ought certainly to make sure we understand the general conceptions before we cavil at the details. Mr. Richards has reordered an important conception of imagination, and crowned it. We have only, to get the most out of Mr. Richards, to remember and bring to bear, for pressure and modification, all those other forms of imagination that do not bring their meanings home in words. The conjunction will, I think, make Mr. Richards the more, not the less, valuable. "Until you understand a man's ignorance," said Coleridge, "presume yourself ignorant of his understanding."

R. P. Blackmur

Claudius as Emperor

Claudius the God. By Robert Graves. Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $3.

IN a review of "I, Claudius" written last June, I expressed a sincere regret that Mr. Graves had chosen to end his autobiography of the stammering emperor with his accession to power in the year 41 A. D. I was more than regretful; I was curious. The Claudius who appeared in that volume was a thoroughly consistent character, a sensible, kind-hearted liberal whose foolish face and body concealed a shrewd and lively intelligence. How, I wondered, would Mr. Graves explain the Claudius who lived to rule Rome for thirteen years, the silly tool of a vicious wife, the dupe of his freedmen, and the victim of his niece? Mr. Graves has now written a sequel which carries Claudius from his accession to his death, but I am still curious, and regretful, too. The disintegration of the emperor remains inexplicable, and the exuberant live Romans of the earlier volume have altogether ossified in "Claudius the God." It was pleasanter to speculate on the sequel Mr. Graves might have written than to read the one he actually wrote.

It must be admitted that Mr. Graves was here faced with no simple problem. To interpret a sudden shift of character, a complete reversal of attitude, is always difficult, and in the case of Claudius time has doubtless obliterated many details which might once have been illuminating. Yet Mr. Graves, in attempting the sequel, has set himself the problem, and one has every right to demand that he come to grips with it. This he shows himself incapable of doing. More often than not he is evasive, concerning himself more with events than with character. While in Rome Messalina's influence waxes and Claudius's rule grows steadily more despotic, Mr. Graves carefully focuses his story on Judea, on Parthia, Alexandria, Germany, or Britain. These ostrich-like tactics have had the unfortunate effect of destroying what little unity the book might otherwise have possessed. The reader's mind is clogged with masses of irrelevant detail; his attention is only too successfully distracted from Claudius. When at last Mr. Graves is brought face to face with the question of Messalina and her power over Claudius, he takes refuge in an explanation that reeks of French bedroom farce. Messalina, whose real sins were at least on the grand scale, is reduced to a charming, adulterous young wife, while Claudius plays the doddering cuckold who can be lulled with a kiss and a smile while the lover hides under the bed.

Mr. Graves's treatment of the infamous Messalina is characteristic of his approach to all his people and to his story as a whole. Herod Agrippa, a wily Jewish king with Messianic delusions, becomes a wisecracking young scamp in the modern style, and Nero is treated as a foppish, extravagant boy. Unable to understand his characters on their own terms, Mr. Graves debases them until their vices and virtues are petty enough to be dealt with in an easy, ironical manner. In "I, Claudius" there were melodrama and wit and grandeur and horror. In "Claudius the God" only the wit remains, and it has been a little blunted.

Mary McCarthy

In Soviet Asia

Changing Asia. By Egon Erwin Kisch. English Version by Rita Reil. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.

FOR those who think of the Soviet Union as "Russia" this book will be an endless series of surprises. Deep in the heart of Central Asia—in the land of the Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kirghiz, and Kazaks—there is little trace of Russia, its customs, culture, or speech; but of Soviet influence, as Mr. Kisch has so brilliantly shown, there is enough to furnish material for a striking volume. Like all authentic books on the Soviet Union, "Changing Asia" is a study of contrasts, of the gulf between the old and the new, between the most backward portion of the Orient and the most advanced sector of the Occident. One finds districts which for filth and dilapidation are comparable only to the slums of Tunis or the Negro villages of the northern Sahara. Yet side by side with this squalor are women's clubs, modern nurseries, gynecological clinics, medical schools, moving-picture studios, technical schools, modern factories, and well-equipped workers' clubs.

Behind these contrasts lies one of the most absorbing social dramas in history. Within a period of less than half a generation—much of this region was not finally attached to the Soviet Union until 1922—an entire people has emerged, or is in process of emerging, from medievalism into the full current of modern Soviet life. Prior to the revolution the population of this sector was entirely Mohammedan. Polygamy was universal among those who could afford it; women, without exception, were veiled and isolated in the *ichkari.* At least 95 per cent of the men and practically all women were illiterate. Syphilis, malaria, and epidemic diseases took their annual toll of tens of thousands of the population. Shopkeeping, farming, and rug-making—the prevailing occupations—were carried on under the most primitive conditions.

The old has not completely been abolished. But except in the most isolated sections women have been freed from their age-old bondage. Even in backward regions of the Pamir more than 80 per cent of the boys and 15 per cent of the girls are now in school, while their elders are in special classes for the illiterate. Preventable diseases have been cut to a small fraction of their former incidence. Modern factories have been built, irrigation projects opened, and vast gains made in technical development. The story is commonplace enough to one familiar with the Soviet Union, yet in the hands of Mr. Kisch it is not a recital of statistics but the tale of a social cataclysm transforming the lives of men and women.

His story of Khassyad Mirkulan, a young Tajik woman, in a sense epitomizes the new life of all women. Khassyad Mirkulan was born at Chustpap in 1904. When she was eight years old she was veiled; at fourteen she was married—a relatively advanced age because of the poverty of the family. After six months her husband died, and a year later she was sent as a servant to the house of an Ishan, a miracle man. One day when she was out hunting frogs for the Ishan's youngest wife, who was ill, she chanced to encounter a demon-

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stration in celebration of March 8—International Women's Day. At the invitation of one of the leaders, she was persuaded, with many misgivings, to enter a local school, where she saw her first bathtub, slept in her first bed, and received the first rudiments of formal education. The years that followed could be paralleled by the experience of tens of thousands of young Soviet women: school, marriage, the university, political activity, which led in her case to the position of vice-chairman of the city soviet, and finally a position in remote Garm, where she is in charge of the work for the liberation of women. "Changing Asia" deals with only a small sector of the Soviet Union, but is so vivid and so authentic that one is inclined to recommend it to those who have time to read only one book on "Russia." MAXWELL S. STEWART

Western

Riding the Mustang Trail. By Forrester Blake. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

MUSTANGS are wild horses, shaggy, small, and more unmanageable than wild cattle. About every forty years these horses, in herds with their chosen leaders, become so numerous in New Mexico that they threaten to destroy the cattle ranges. Then cow punchers are paid two-fifty a head to round them up and drive them out. Two or three years ago Forrester Blake, known to his friends as "Pat," joined in one of these round-ups—the last, perhaps, ever to occur, for today the Western ranges are fenced and the cattle companies are smaller and much poorer than in the good old days. Together with four other cow punchers he organized an outfit, collected his herd, and drove the little horses four hundred miles into Oklahoma, to be sold for seven or eight dollars apiece. And then, because he is a natural-born writer, he wrote it all down.

His book is one of the most authentic and best-written accounts of the true West to be published in years. Mr. Blake has the country in his bones. He knows it as it really is; he delights in its austere and dangerous beauty. Without indulging in melodrama, without growing mystical about it, as so many Eastern writers do, he gives the reader more excitement, more feeling for the scene, than most of our so-called Western writers put together. Here are stories of rattlesnakes, of terrific drought, of horses lost in quicksand, of stampedes, of night herding, of strange characters that will make your hair stand on end. And every story is true.

Pat Blake is only twenty-two now; he was not more than twenty when he wrote this book. He loves more than anything in the world the open country, its men, its outlandish variety of weather and event. He talks in the Western idiom. Fortunately his college education has not made him less colloquial. He gives back speech and incident exactly as he heard and saw them. His outfit was one of the most absurd ever to cross the mountains and the plains. The "'chuck wagon" was a Chevrolet car on the point of going to pieces. There was only one trained cow pony for five men, one "slicker," or raincoat, insufficient bedding, no money to speak of. It was this company that covered four hundred miles of unknown trails with a herd of wild and completely unpredictable animals and arrived at its destination. Even the old-timer with a stomach ulcer who almost died on the way got there. Pat himself was the greenhorn among these men, but he learned.

Unforgettable scenes and incidents fill these pages. The mad and unsuccessful shooting of a locoed horse that refused to die even with several bullets in its brain; the stampede into a barbed-wire fence when horses with wide open gashes across chest and spine fled across the prairies into the mountains;

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Of the reverent yet humanly passionate poem that Mr. Stokowski has made of certain music from Act III of Wagner's *Parsifal,* it is difficult to speak with restraint. *Parsifal* may be, as someone has said, a work of "exquisite moments and interminable half-hours", yet in these two records there is nothing but the potent distillate of Wagner's genius; a synthesis of all the elements that make *Parsifal* a wonder of mystical loveliness—that made Wagner not merely a personage, but a force in the world of music. The recording is worthy of the music and of the orchestra.

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Mr. Blake has almost completed another book about a cow camp as it exists today. He is full of books, he says, and one believes him, for he is absorbed in giving us the West in its absolute reality. His style is his own but perhaps it is not a style at all. Pat, in other words, is a "natural," if that much-abused word can be employed to describe a writer who must write even as he must eat. EDA LOU WALTON

Films

On a Classic

AMONG the more gratifying phenomena of the current season has been the growing recognition of "It Happened One Night," the Frank Capra production of last year, as one of the few potential classics of the recent cinema. Having been selected as the best American picture of the year by the National Board of Review and other organizations, and having earned for its director and players a handsome collection of gold medals, it is at the moment in its third week of revival at a New York playhouse—a tribute usually reserved for certain films of Chaplin and certain cartoons by Walt Disney. What is perhaps most gratifying about all this is that it has come about without any of the usual ventilation of superlatives which attends the birth of a masterpiece in the American screen world. Nothing in the subject, the personnel, the surrounding circumstances of this particular film offered the least pretext for the beating of the big drum. There had been a whole succession of pictures based on the picaresque aspects of the cross-country bus; neither Claudette Colbert nor Clark Gable was a reigning favorite with the great popular public; and Frank Capra was merely one of several better than average Hollywood directors. In brief, the wholly spontaneous response with which the picture was received could be traced to no novelty or originality in its component elements. A second viewing of it at the Little Carnegie confirms this truth at the same time that it enforces the realization of how difficult it is, at the present stage of motion-picture production and appreciation, to determine what it is precisely which makes a good photoplay. It is true that the story, which is a mixture of both farcical and realistic situations, is exceptionally well put together from almost every point of view. It is developed with the galloping pace that good farce requires, and the timing of individual scenes is invariably well managed. But here it is hard to distinguish between the work of the script-writers and the work of the director, who is perhaps even more responsible for maintaining an unerring accuracy of tempo throughout. And is it quite fair to ignore what the players may be contributing to the same effect? Although neither Miss Colbert nor Mr. Gable had demonstrated any particular comic talent before this picture, their playing here is at every step exactly in tune with the mood of the occasion. As for the content of the film, which may possibly be distinguished from the treatment, one can remark only that it is authentically indigenous without being in any way novel or striking. An honest documentation of familiar American actualities becomes, in a Hollywood film, more absorbing than intrigue in Monte Carlo or pig-sticking in Bengal. Also one might point out that the manner in which this material is utilized for comic purposes strikes a nice balance between pure farce and serious

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social satire. The result of the balance is something less tiresome than the first, and less precarious to the comic intention than the second. But the effort to fix and label the particular quality which separates this film from the dozen or more substantially like it in recent years is bound to end only in an admission of critical humiliation. A good photoplay, like a good book or a good piece of music, remains always something of a miracle—in the least sentimental sense of that word. Beyond a certain point the mind is forced to bow down before its own inability to unravel and put together again *all* the parts of the shining and imponderable whole with which it is dealing.

The Balderston-Unger adaptation of Dickens's unfinished "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" turns out to be much the most successful of the several recent efforts to reconstruct the mood and atmosphere of early Victorian England. Under the expert direction of the veteran Stuart Walker, this tale of moral degeneration and crime in a cathedral close is made into one of the most consistently harrowing films of the season. It is worth seeing if only for those scenes in which Claude Rains, as the depraved choirmaster, exhibits once again his unsurpassed talents for the more satanic type of role. Another "thriller" of almost equal merit, "The Man Who Knew Too Much," has just arrived from the British studios. Uniformly well acted by a cast that includes Edna Best, Nova Pilbeam, Pierre Fresnay, and Peter Lorre (the child murderer in Fritz Lang's "M"), it manages to hold its interest despite the somewhat unconvincing attempt, in the latter sections, to transform London's Wapping into a replica of Chicago's South Side. It is probably a fact of some significance that in both these additions to the cinema of horror both acting and direction are on a considerably higher plane of sophistication than the material.

WILLIAM TROY

Drama

Mr. Odets Speaks His Mind

A NEW production by the Group Theater supplies the answer to a question I asked in this column three weeks ago. Mr. Clifford Odets, the talented author of "Awake and Sing," has come out for the revolution and thrown in his artistic lot with those who use the theater for direct propaganda. The earlier play, it seems, was written some three years ago before his convictions had crystallized, and it owes to that fact a certain contemplative and brooding quality. The new ones—there are two on a double bill at the Longacre—waste no time on what the author now doubtless regards as side issues, and they hammer away with an unrelenting insistency upon a single theme: Workers of the World Unite!

"Waiting for Lefty," a brief sketch suggested by the recent strike of taxi drivers, is incomparably the better of the two, and whatever else one may say of it, there is no denying its effectiveness as a tour de force. It begins *in media res* on the platform at a strikers' meeting, and "plants" interrupting from the audience create the illusion that the meeting is actually taking place at the very moment of representation. Brief flashbacks reveal crucial moments in the lives of the drivers, but the scene really remains in the hall itself, and the piece ends when the strike is voted. The pace is swift, the characterization is for the most part crisp, and the points are made, one after another, with bold simplicity. What Mr. Odets is trying to do could hardly be done more economically or more effectively.

Cold analysis, to be sure, clearly reveals the fact that such simplicity must be paid for at a certain price. The villains

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are mere caricatures and even the very human heroes occasionally freeze into stained-glass attitudes, as, for example, a certain lady secretary in one of the flashbacks does when she suddenly stops in her tracks to pay a glowing tribute to "The Communist Manifesto" and to urge its perusal upon all and sundry. No one, however, expects subtleties from a soap-box, and the interesting fact is that Mr. Odets has invented a form which turns out to be a very effective dramatic equivalent of soap-box oratory.

Innumerable other "proletarian" dramatists have tried to do the same thing with far less success. Some of them have got bogged in futuristic symbolism which could not conceivably do more than bewilder "the worker"; others have stuck close to the usual form of the drama without realizing that this form was developed for other uses and that their attempt to employ it for directly hortatory purposes can only end in what appears to be more than exceedingly crude dramaturgy. Mr. Odets, on the other hand, has made a clean sweep of the conventional form along with the conventional intentions. He boldly accepts as his scene the very platform he intends to use, and from it permits his characters to deliver speeches which are far more convincing there than they would be if elaborately worked into a conventional dramatic story. Like many of his fellows he has evidently decided that art is a weapon, but unlike many who proclaim the doctrine, he has the full courage of his conviction. To others he leaves the somewhat nervous determination to prove that direct exhortation can somehow be made compatible with "art" and that "revolutionary" plays can be two things at once. The result of his downrightness is to succeed where most of the others have failed. He does not ask to be judged by any standards except those which one would apply to the agitator, but by those standards his success is very nearly complete.

"Waiting for Lefty" is played upon what is practically a bare stage. It could be acted in any union hall by amateur actors, and the fact accords well with the intention of a play which would be wholly in place as part of the campaign laid out by any strike committee. Indeed, it is somewhat out of place anywhere else for the simple reason that its appeal to action is too direct not to seem almost absurd when addressed to an audience most of whose members are not, after all, actually faced with the problem which is put up to them in so completely concrete a form. The play might, on the other hand, actually turn the tide at a strikers' meeting, and that is more than can be said of most plays whose avowed intention is to promote the class war.

As for the other piece, "Till the Day I Die," there is much less to be said in its favor. The hero is a young German whose loyalty to the Communist Party survives the tortures applied by fiendish storm troopers, but a note on the program suggests the reason why the play lacks the air of reality. It was "suggested by a letter from Germany printed in the *New Masses*," and obviously the author had too little to go on. However much "Waiting for Lefty" may owe to a Marxian formula, both the characters and the situation come within the range of the author's experience and there is a basis of concrete reality. "Till the Day I Die" is founded upon nothing except the printed word, and the characters are mere men of wax. In so far as we believe it at all, we do so only because we have been told that such things do happen. There is little in the play itself to carry conviction, and neither its hero nor its villains seem very much more real than those of the simplest and most old-fashioned melodramas. The acting in the two pieces is as different as they are themselves. Mr. Odets's Germans strike attitudes and declaim. His strikers are so real—perhaps so actual would be better—that when the play is over one expects to find their cabs outside.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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